THE BIBLE OF BOXING

The RING

OUR EXCLUSIVE RANKINGS
P. 30

GENNADY GOLOVKIN

CANELO ALVAREZ

100 BEST FIGHTERS IN THE WORLD

VASYL LOMACHENKO

GUILLERMO RIGONDEAUX

TERENCE CRAWFORD

OUT ON TOP
ANDRE WARD RETIRES AS P4P KING (P. 64)

JAKE LAMOTTA
THE 'BULL' WAS MORE THAN A MOVIE CHARACTER (P. 70)

REMATCH, PLEASE
CANELO-GGG WAS GOOD, BUT A DRAW? (P. 56)

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the RING

VOLUME 97, NO. 1

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Andre Ward always remained cool under pressure.

MARCIO JOSE SANCHEZ

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Tony DeMarco (left) tangled with Carmen Basilio in THE RING's Fight of the Year for 1955.

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TRICKY TASK

The process of rating fighters is an inexact science, as I've written more than once.

The RING divisional ratings are based primarily on results in a particular weight class, with some emphasis on success at lower weights. In other words, if you beat top-tier opponents consistently, you can enter and rise in the Top 10.

The pound-for-pound rankings are different.

P4P isn't a complicated concept: Those on the list are the best fighters regardless of weight. How do we determine that? That's more complicated. Put simply: We try to balance recent accomplishments and the very subjective "eye test."

GGG is the new P4P king.

That leads me to the point of this column. We had to replace Andre Ward as our No. 1 fighter pound-for-pound. We elevated Gennady Golovkin, who was No. 2 when Ward announced his retirement.

Some agreed with our decision, some didn't, which is par for the course.

We went with Golovkin for a number of reasons.

One, we felt he was the second best fighter in the world – based on both resume and the eye test – until Ward retired. That's why he was No. 2.

Two, he was coming off a victory over highly respected Daniel Jacobs and a draw against fellow pound-for-pounder Canelo Alvarez that the vast majority of viewers thought he deserved to win.

And, three, he still passes the eye test. Some have been critical of him because he didn't overwhelm Jacobs and Canelo as he had other opponents, but we attribute that more to quality of opposition than any slippage on GGG's part.

Canelo is ranked No. 6 pound-for-pound and on our RING 100 list, which is featured in this issue (Page 30). Jacobs is No. 24 on the list. That's first-rate opposition.

Other obvious options were Terence Crawford (the Boxing Writers Association of America No. 1) and Vasyl Lomachenko, both of whom receive higher grades than Golovkin in the eye test.

And I should point out that the RING editorial staff members are universally enthusiastic fans of both Crawford and Lomachenko, who we believe have what it takes to rise to No. 1 sometime in the near future.

That said, against whom have they looked so good?

Crawford's most important victories came over Viktor Postol and Julius Indongo, who are ranked Nos. 55 and 72 in the RING 100. (Postol was No. 33 last year, Indongo not ranked.) Lomachenko's biggest wins were over a young Gary Russell Jr. and Nicholas Walters. Russell is No. 25 now but wasn't ranked when they fought in 2014. And Walters is No. 75 this year, No. 45 last year.

That isn't to denigrate the opponents of Crawford and Lomachenko; they're just a notch below Jacobs and Canelo, which worked in GGG's favor during our deliberations.

Again, nothing in sports is much more subjective than pound-for-pound lists. Good arguments can be made for Golovkin, Crawford and Lomachenko. And you're not wrong no matter which fighter you choose.

We just felt it was Golovkin's time.

Canelo Alvarez (right) tested Gennady Golovkin's beard (and vice versa) more than once during their fight to a draw in Las Vegas on Sept. 16.

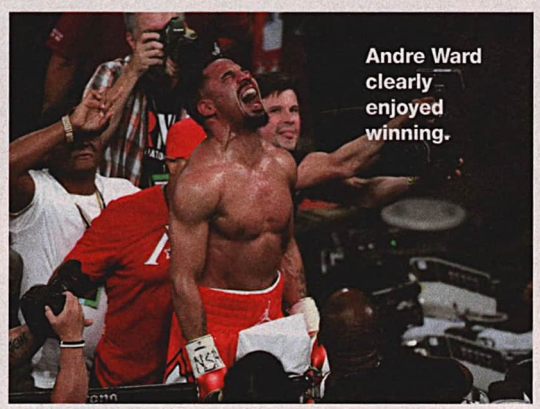
NOT NO. 1

I have purchased every issue of THE RING Magazine since January 1961. I bought the first magazine when I was 14. I have followed the sport for a long time. I am writing about Ray Robinson being placed No. 1 in the middleweight division ("Middle Ground," November 2017 issue). He might be the best professional boxer of all time. For sure the best welterweight of all time. But his record as the middleweight champion is very mediocre. … At 160 I don't see him beating Carlos Monzon or Marvin Hagler. On your list he lost to Nos. 8, 12, 13, 15, 16, 21 and 22. When James Toney and Roy Jones were champs at 160, Sugar Ray might not have beaten them either. I really enjoyed watching Sugar Ray Robinson fight. He was terrific. He was untouchable at 147. At 160 he was just real good, and ranking him No. 1 might feel good, but it is an injustice to the middleweight champions that were better.

Mike Pizzuto
Mount Vernon, Wash.

HE DID IT HIS WAY

Andre Ward's recent retirement from boxing will hopefully see him more widely appreciated for the great fighter he's been over the years. Ward was a rare type of fighter who could do it all: He could box from long range, fight inside, control the distance and throw any punch at any time. But more than that, it was his belief in himself and his determination to find a way to win that were perhaps his greatest attributes. Ward was not without his critics due to his style, which was seen by some as being dull or dirty, but few fighters knew how to utilize their strengths better than Ward did. It wasn't always pretty to watch, but he always found a way to win. Andre Ward now leaves the ring the way he fought inside it, by doing things completely on his own terms and going out on top.


Andre Ward clearly enjoyed winning.

Steven Bond,
Castleford, UK.

ENCORE!

Alvarez vs. Golovkin certainly didn't let us down. What a contest, both men with granite chins and oozing skill and power, neither afraid to unleash on the other. Alvarez threw some great combinations and I don't care how many times Triple-G shook his head in dismissal – he felt them. In turn, Golovkin is like a tank pressing forward and I don't know how Alvarez withstood such power. At the end, many pundits on the TV had a win for Triple-G. But I commented it depends whether they favor someone coming forward all the time, or if they see it closer with Alvarez's earlier work and trading in the last two rounds. There is every chance it will be a draw! I'm not saying it was, but I wasn't surprised. One of my sons agreed and another was outraged when it was called. He thought Golovkin won. But then my youngest son shouted out, "A draw! I've won 54 pounds!" My household was split, but gosh did we enjoy a great fight by two modern legends. Same again please … a rematch.

Ray Fox
Keighley, England

EMBARRASSED

I have been a huge boxing fan for over 30 years. Unfortunately, that fact is getting harder and harder to admit. The only thing worse than the decision in this fight is the way the HBO commentators acted like it was OK! Max Kellerman and Roy Jones Jr. spent most of the fight degrading GGG for boxing smart while they were praising Canelo for "controlling the fight." If you compare this fight round by round with the Mayweather vs. McGregor farce, the only real difference is that Canelo knew how to avoid getting knocked out while he was running after he realized he couldn't win in the 4th round. The 118-110 scorecard will focus all of the talk on one judge, but the real issue is that the fight, while entertaining, wasn't close! If boxing was outlawed due to professional misconduct, I don't think I would be able to protest.

Matt Fields
Fayette, Ohio

SHUSH!

I have been watching boxing matches for the past 58 years and continue to enjoy fights on TV. However, I find today's boxing commentators extremely distracting. The reason I often turn the volume off is I don't need to have a commentator constantly tell me what punch was thrown or hear over and over what a boxer should or should not do. I think the enjoyment of matches today would dramatically improve if today's commentators would follow how Don Dunphy announced bouts in the 1960s. To say the least, he was low-profile and didn't interfere with constant talking. Let us just enjoy the fights and let boxers do their own thing! You know the boxers are the ones putting their lives on the line!

Gary Isham
Mount Vernon, Wash.

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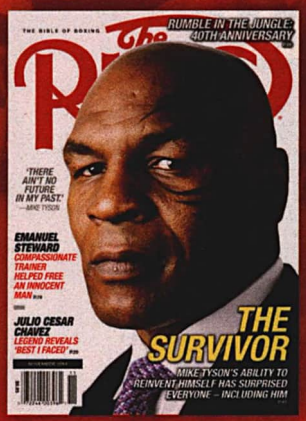

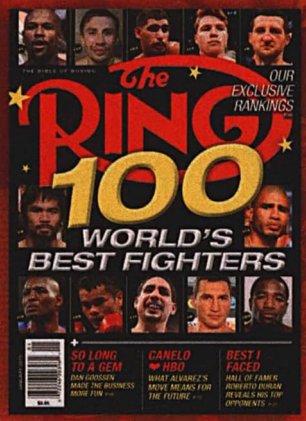

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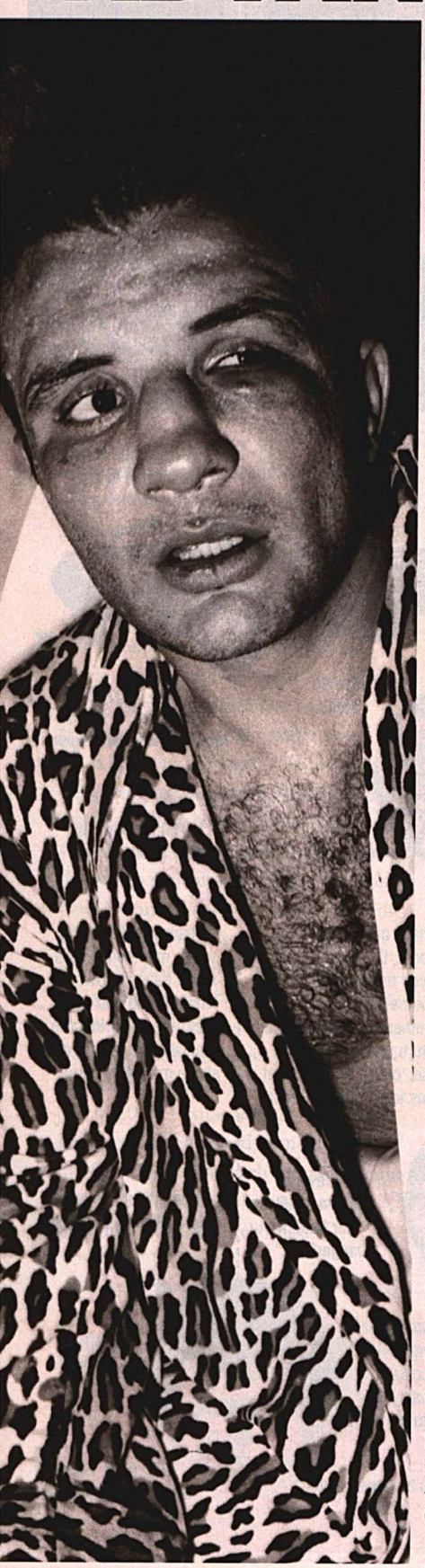
ADVANCED DEGREES



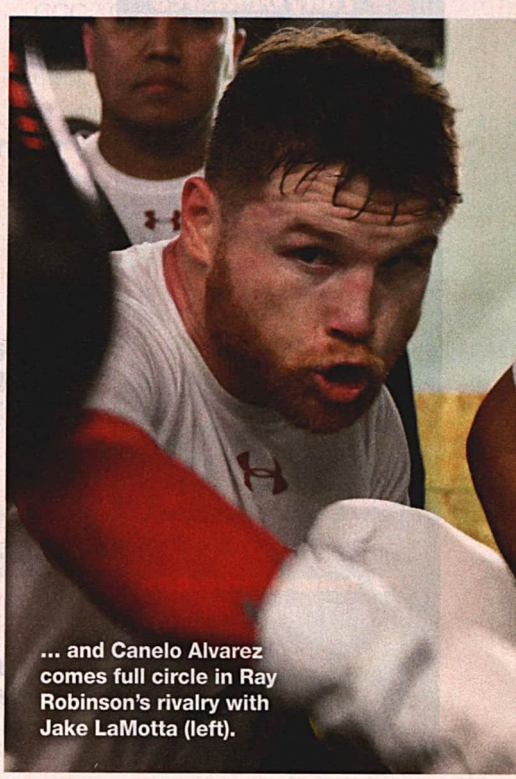
Degrees of separation between fighters of the past and their more contemporary counterparts. This month, regular contributor Gregg Morgan connected late middleweight champion **Jake LaMotta (and nemesis Ray Robinson)** with the two top 160-pounders today – **Gennady Golovkin** and **Canelo Alvarez** – in eight steps each.

« **JAKE LAMOTTA** fought
SUGAR RAY ROBINSON, who fought
DENNY MOYER, who fought
VITO ANTUOFERMO, who fought
LARRY MCCALL, who fought
BRETT LALLY, who fought
CHAD DAWSON, who fought
IAN GARDNER, who fought
GENNADY GOLOVKIN »

★ ★ ★

« **JAKE LAMOTTA** fought
SUGAR RAY ROBINSON, who fought
RALPH DUPAS, who fought
EMILE GRIFFITH, who fought
ARMANDO MUNIZ, who fought
CARLOS PALOMINO, who fought
WILFREDO RIVERA, who fought
SHANE MOSLEY, who fought
CANELO ALVAREZ »

The rivalry between Gennady Golovkin ...



... and Canelo Alvarez comes full circle in Ray Robinson's rivalry with Jake LaMotta (left).

10

A MONTHLY BOXING LIST

This month: Jake LaMotta, who died at 95 in September, was recognized as the oldest living former world titleholder. Robert Cohen, the former bantamweight titleholder, is now believed to have that distinction.

Here are 10 beltholders who are at least 79 (in order of age and including the years they were active and weight for which they are primarily known).

86 Robert Cohen
1951-59 (bantamweight)

85 Tony DeMarco
1948-62 (welterweight)

84 Harold Gomes
1951-63 (junior lightweight)

83 Horacio Accavallo
1956-67 (flyweight)

81 Eder Jofre
1957-76 (bantamweight)

81 Freddie Little 1957-72 (junior middleweight)

81 Carlos Ortiz
1955-72 (lightweight)

80 Curtis Cokes
1958-72 (welterweight)

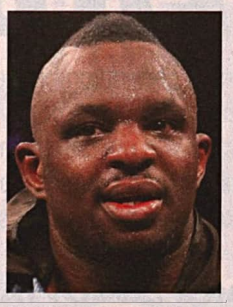
79 Nino Benvenuti
1961-71 (middleweight)

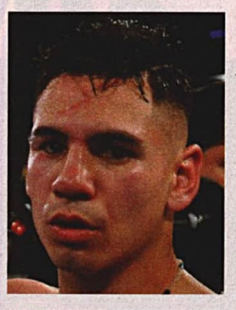
79 Alessandro Mazzinghi
1961-78 (junior middleweight)

FIGHTERS' FAVORITES

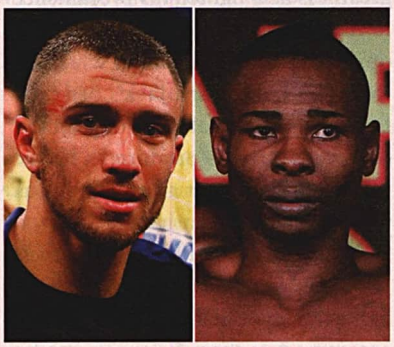
WHAT BOXERS ARE INTO OUTSIDE THE SPORT

— Anson Wainwright





FIGHTER »	DILLIAN WHYTE HEAVYWEIGHT CONTENDER	SAM SOLIMAN FORMER MIDDLEWEIGHT TITLEHOLDER	MANUEL AVILA FEATHERWEIGHT STANDOUT
MUSIC »	"I haven't really got a favorite type of music. Music depends for me on my mood, whether I'm training, relaxing or at the gym. I listen to everything, from classic to rock music."	"I like hip-hop."	"I like all kinds of music but I listen to rap."
CAR »	"Range Rover and a Mercedes. My dream car would be an old-school Ford Mustang."	"I drive an Audi."	"A 2015 Dodge Ram. Dream car, a **1970 Dodge Challenger.**"
FOOD »	"Caribbean food."	**"Pasta."**	"I'd have to say Mexican."
TATTOOS »	"I've got one on my left arm – it goes around my chest and my back and shoulders. It's about my life story and what life means to me and what I am as a person."	"I have one; I have a St. George, the Spartan that slayed the dragon. ... It's sentimental because my late father used to have that picture on my wall in our house, 'cause he'd say that was to protect our family."	"I have a tattoo of my wife's name on my left arm. I have a crown on my right rib that says 'Rey,' meaning 'King' in Spanish. And then a rose above my wife's name."
ATHLETE OUTSIDE BOXING »	"**Usain Bolt** and Mo Farah."	"My favorite athlete is AFL star Patrick Dangerfield."	"Even though he's just retired, **Kobe Bryant**."
MOVIE »	**"'Cool Runnings.'"**	"'Spartacus' with Kirk Douglas and probably 'The Godfather.'"	"'Price of Glory.'"
VIDEO GAME »	"I play 'Call of Duty' and 'Mortal Kombat.'"	"To be honest, I don't play."	"The older 'Need for Speed' racing games."

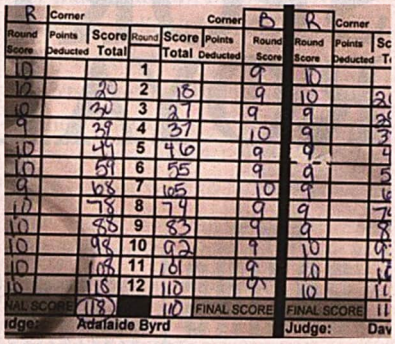


GOOD

I suspect the recently announced fight between **Vasyl Lomachenko** and **Guillermo Rigondeaux** in December could turn out to be less than entertaining, as all Rigondeaux fights seem to be. Still, this is one of the more fascinating matchups in recent years because of the abilities of the fighters, both two-time Olympic gold medalists with impeccable skillsets. Their combination of talent and polish might be unmatched among active fighters. This is Bobby Fischer vs. Boris Spassky, the famous chess match between two savants in 1972. It might not be thrilling to watch but you know they're exceptionally good at what they do, which provides intrigue. I don't see how Rigondeaux can win. He's moving up two weight classes to face arguably the most gifted active fighter. And he's 37, an age when great athletes generally slow down. I'm pleased that he got the opportunity, though; he has been trying to get a big fight since turning pro in 2009. Lomachenko got one in his second fight. Mostly I'm happy for the fans. They constantly clamor for the best to fight the best. Lomachenko vs. Rigondeaux is definitely that.

BAD

What good is a fight (or series) if one can't watch it? That's how I felt on the day I tried but failed to watch **Mairis Briedis vs. Mike Perez**, one of the World Boxing Super Series cruiserweight quarterfinals. Of course, a lot of people had no trouble viewing it. It was on TV in Europe. And WBSS officials recently made a deal to televise fights on "AUDIENCE Network and other AT&T platforms," according to a WBSS press release. That's well and good for those with access to AUDIENCE and the other platforms. I and millions of others are not among them. I thought the fight would be streamed on the WBSS site, as earlier fights were, but discovered moments before fight time that I was mistaken. I tried a few other options and had no luck. Oh well. No Briedis-Perez fight. I get that TV deals are finite and difficult make. And I know that WBSS officials would want every earthling to watch their fights. All I'm saying is that I'm interested in the cruiserweight and super middleweight tournaments. I like tournaments. It's just difficult to get excited about them when you can't watch. I truly hope this problem is rectified soon. And I believe it will be.



WORSE

Judge **Adelaide Byrd** sullied an otherwise great fight when she scored a close contest between Canelo Alvarez and Gennady Golovkin 118-110 – an absurd 10 rounds to two – for Canelo on September 16 in Las Vegas. A week later, in Manchester, England, judges John Madfis and Terry O'Connor gave Joseph Parker that same 118-110 score against Hughie Fury even though that fight also was tight. Two countries, two weeks, three horrible scorecards. The sport will survive; it always does. The problem is that people – particularly casual fans – take it less seriously every time something like this happens. Family members and friends should've said to me after Canelo-GGG, "Great fight, huh?" Instead, they asked, "Was it fixed?" I told each of them, "No, I don't think so. I think it was incompetence." Either way, the perception that something isn't right lingers. And boxing suffers. Put simply: Casual and prospective fans are less likely to tune in if they think the sport is not on the up-and-up. I wouldn't necessarily take the judging licenses of Byrd, Madfis or O'Connor. I would pull out all stops to determine what happened, send them back to judging school and make it clear to other judges: Get it right, or else.

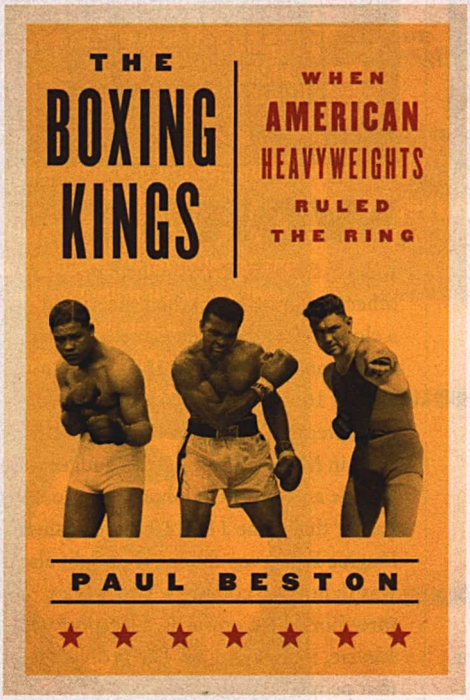
RING POLL **» A MONTHLY POLL OF OUR RINGTV.COM READERS**

Andre Ward recently announced his retirement, which opened up the top spot on the pound-for-pound list. We asked: **WHO SHOULD BE NO. 1 POUND-FOR-POUND?** Here is how you responded. **Note:** 1,153 readers voted.

THE PERCENTAGES

46.31	« GENNADY GOLOVKIN
27.41	TERENCE CRAWFORD »
15.09	VASYL LOMACHENKO
4.25	CANELO ALVAREZ
3.82	OTHER
3.14	MIKEY GARCIA

SPORTS ROYALTY



'WHEN AMERICAN HEAVYWEIGHTS RULED THE RING'

For more than a century, the heavyweight champion of the world was sports royalty. But unlike many kings, whose authority is bestowed as an accident of birth, these men derived their authority first through conquest and then from the consent of the governed.

"The Boxing Kings: When American Heavyweights Ruled the Ring" by Paul Beston (Rowman & Littlefield) is a history of the heavyweight championship in America from the 1880s through the end of the 20th century.

The heavyweight title, Beston writes, was once "a defining property in sports" and American champions were "symbols of national might." But "boxing lost its narrative in America. The rise of competitive sports as a commercial industry, a story in which boxing was integral, eventually left the sport trailing badly behind."

Beston places special emphasis on seven champions who held what he calls "a defining place in our culture": John L. Sullivan, Jack Johnson, Jack Dempsey, Joe Louis, Rocky Marciano, Muhammad Ali and Mike Tyson. These seven and their brethren are examined in the context of their times and with appreciation for boxing's "capacity to absorb such varieties of human character."

The lineage begins with John L. Sullivan.

"Sullivan," Beston writes, "came along with no precedents for the role he was about to play, which was to become the George Washington of boxing and America's first sports superstar. In 1882, the year Sullivan won the heavyweight championship, the idea of professional sports was in its infancy. Professional baseball was just coming into existence. The National League had been founded six years earlier. American football was barely a flicker in the eye of Yale's Walter Camp. Basketball had not yet been invented."

Thereafter, Beston continues, "The evolution of the heavyweight championship from an underground quasi-mythical title to a commercial property was part of a social revolution, one in which working-class passions would create a new popular culture in America."

No sporting event in history has matched the social significance of Jack Johnson vs. James Jeffries, the second encounter between Joe Louis and Max Schmeling, and the first Ali-Joe Frazier fight.

Beston acknowledges Johnson's greatness as a fighter, his prominence in American social history and the oppressive racial climate in which he lived. But citing Papa Jack's personal flaws, he posits that "the long cycle of redefinition has produced a heroic image that is almost as misleading as the original racist caricature."

Of Jack Dempsey, Beston observes, "So many people wanted to see his fights that special arenas were built to accommodate them."

Then, after Gene Tunney (Dempsey's conqueror) retired, Max Schmeling, Jack Sharkey, Primo Carnera, Max Baer and James Braddock arrived sequentially on the scene. That paved the way for Joe Louis. In Beston's words, "Five uninspiring heavyweight champions plus Depression economics made the public more receptive to breaking the color line."

Ultimately, Rocky Marciano filled the void in the public imagination left by Louis' retirement.

Muhammad Ali was the next man to be enshrined in heavyweight boxing's pantheon of gods.

"Ali, Frazier and Foreman made an unequaled heavyweight trio," Beston declares. "It was as if Jack Dempsey, Joe Louis and Rocky Marciano had all competed during the same era." But Beston goes on to write, "Before Ali, the title had made smaller men into bigger men. After him, the title seemed somehow smaller."

That trend continued with Mike Tyson, who Beston calls "the final towering figure" in the American heavyweight lineage. Writing of the years after Tyson was deposed, Beston states, "For most of the public, the term 'heavyweight champion' still signified one man: Tyson. As with Ali, his non-possession of the title seemed incidental, a nettlesome technicality. Tyson's global fame made his possession, or non-possession, of the official title virtually irrelevant."

Beston writes well. There's a nice flow to the book. He has done a lot of research, and it shows. The major fights are nicely recounted.

He also does a pretty good job of separating allegorical anecdotes from reality. For example, there's a tale that many writers (including yours truly) have told of Frankin Roosevelt inviting Joe Louis to the White House in 1938, squeezing Louis' biceps, and saying, "Joe, we need muscles like yours to beat Germany."

"The 1938 meeting," Beston writes, "never happened. Louis did have a friendly visit with FDR a few years earlier."

But there are places where Beston falls short. Some of his errors are niggling misstatements of fact. He writes that the three Floyd Patterson-Ingemar Johansson fights represented the first time that "two men fought three times for the heavyweight title." Ezzard Charles vs. Jersey Joe Walcott counters that notion. Similarly, Beston states that Axel Schulz (who challenged George Foreman in 1995) was "the first German to fight for the crown since Max Schmeling." People who remember Muhammad Ali vs. Karl Mildenberger would dispute that claim.

More seriously, there are instances where Beston seems to have relied on promotional hype rather than accurate reports. For example, he writes that Larry Holmes and Gerry Cooney had a "50-50 money split," with each fighter being promised $10 million for their 1982 encounter. In reality, Cooney's purse was $8.5 million and Holmes received significantly less.

There are also unsourced statements of questionable veracity, such as the claim that "eight doctors confirmed a torn tendon" in Sonny Liston's shoulder after his loss to Cassius Clay.

That said, "The Boxing Kings" is a good book. Beston condenses a great deal of history into 313 pages and does it well.

★★★

Dreams die hard for fighters. One of the saddest moments in a boxer's life is when he realizes that he'll never be a world champion. Whether he's young or old, it's a painful awakening.

Don Elbaum has been a promoter, manager, matchmaker and just about everything else in boxing for longer than many Social Security recipients have been alive. Elbaum was 7 years old when he went to his first pro fight.

"Willie Pep," he remembers. "It was magic. That's what I was going to be."

And then?

"I had my first amateur fight when I was 13 years old," Elbaum says. "I weighed 126 pounds. The opponent was 16 and weighed 140, but a lot of his weight was in his stomach. He was out of shape and had a huge belly. I got in the ring and I was terrified. The other guy kept coming forward, throwing punches. And I ran. I didn't dance. It wasn't side-to-side movement. I ran backwards as fast as I could to get as far away from him as I could. The entire first round, I didn't throw a punch. Second round, same thing. My cornerman, a guy named Frankie Schwartz, was screaming at me, 'Throw the right hand!' So finally, I stopped, closed my eyes, and threw a right hand as hard as I could. It hit him flush in the belly. There was a loud 'Oooooh!' The other guy doubled over and threw up. So they stopped the fight and gave me a knockout."

So far, so good.

"I won my first 15 fights," Elbaum continues. "I could box. I had a good chin. I was beating tough guys. And I was a dreamer. I had my dreams. All fighters do. Fight number 16 was in Erie. I was fighting a guy who was just out of the Marines and on the verge of beating the crap out of me. I was doing all right until he stunned me with a left hook and followed with a right hand that landed on the top of my head. Then he screamed. He'd broken his hand on my head, so they stopped it. That was my second knockout."

The saga continues.

"So now I'm 16-and-0," Elbaum says. "And I'm more sure than ever that, someday, I'll be a world champion. I didn't think it. I knew it. My next fight, I lost a decision at a tournament in Chicago. I felt bad. But hey, it happens. By the time I was 19, my record was 40-and-7. But the fights I'd lost were to fighters who were bigger than me, older than me, more experienced than me. There was always a reason for losing."

Then something bad happened.

"I lost three fights in a row," Elbaum says. "And I realized I'd never be a world champion. It was like a death sentence. I was devastated. I'd thought my destiny was to be like Willie Pep. Now my dream was dead and it was like the world had come to an end."

★★★

Tim Bradley announced recently that he's retiring from boxing.

Bradley won multiple titles during his 12-year ring career and compiled a record of 33-2-1 (13 knockouts). Those numbers include victories over Juan Manuel Marquez, Devon Alexander, Lamont Peterson, Junior Witter, Ruslan Provodnikov and, yes, Manny Pacquiao. He gave everything he had in every fight and was always willing to go in tough.

Outside the ring, Bradley's conduct has been just as admirable. He's a devoted husband and father and, as I wrote several years ago, "a man you'd let babysit for your children." He has been friendly and accessible to the media and fans. There was never a hint of scandal.

We need more people like Tim Bradley, in and out of boxing.

Thomas Hauser can be reached by email at thauser@rcn.com. His most recent book – "There Will Always Be Boxing" – will be published this fall by the University of Arkansas Press. In 2004, the Boxing Writers Association of America honored Hauser with the Nat Fleischer Award for career excellence in boxing journalism.

Luis Ortiz's climb through the heavyweight ranks has been soured by failed drug tests.

THREE-STRIKE RULE?

BERNARD HOPKINS CALLS FOR LIFETIME BANS FOR REPEATED DRUG CHEATS

This is one in a series of columns by future Hall of Famer Bernard Hopkins, who gives us his thoughts on various subjects important to every boxer and fan. This issue: PEDs.

I truly believe 99 percent of boxers are doing things the right way. I have to believe that until they get caught. But there's always going to be somebody trying to beat the system. It's just the nature of sports, the nature of humans. Everybody wants an edge.

And if you do get caught taking steroids, or PEDs – cheating – then the penalties need to be severe. I'm talking lifetime banishment. But if that's not going to happen, why not a few years out of the ring to think about what you did if you decide to cheat? And a very stiff fine?

If you send a message, you have to send a strong one.

After all, anything (outside the rules) that a fighter can do to enhance his skills or his strength is just plain wrong. Think about how dangerous it is for the fighter who is clean. It can give your opponent extra strength. Could make them more energized in those precious championship rounds.

Thankfully, the WBC (along with the Voluntary Anti-Doping Association) is doing a great job making sure these guys are caught with the Clean Boxing Program.

Everybody needs to be subjected to mandatory testing. The WBC is challenging everyone to fight under the same rules. That's the whole objective: for the athletes to know that they're getting a fair fight. That they will try to beat you with their skills – nothing extra, no advantage. Just traditional boxing skills, honed in the gym. Because I absolutely believe PEDs can be the force that leads an inferior fighter to victory.

Now, I don't suspect any of my opponents of ever juicing. But in today's game, we have to make sure everyone is on an even playing field.

Just look at Deontay Wilder. This guy has now had three fights canceled because his opponents failed drug tests. We at Golden Boy used to promote Luis Ortiz, and he was with us when he tested positive for nandrolone after his first-round KO of Lateef Kayode.

We stuck by him then because he said he didn't know. We gave him another shot. But you have to be more responsible for what goes into your body. At the end of the day, we are grown men. Pleading ignorance of what you took, especially when you've been down that road, there's no excuse. You've got to pay the price. [Editor's note: The Wilder-Ortiz fight was canceled after Ortiz, no longer fighting for Golden Boy, tested positive for a blood-pressure drug that can also be used as a diuretic.]

Once a cheater, always a cheater. If you know a guy who cheated … he or she will always be under a severe microscope, even if they're legit. Credibility in anything holds a lot of weight and people never forget.

I'd like to see boxing adopt something out of baseball. A stiff penalty the first time, a longer suspension the second time and banned for life the third time. Three strikes and you're out.

But look, I really think most guys are doing it the right way. The clean way.

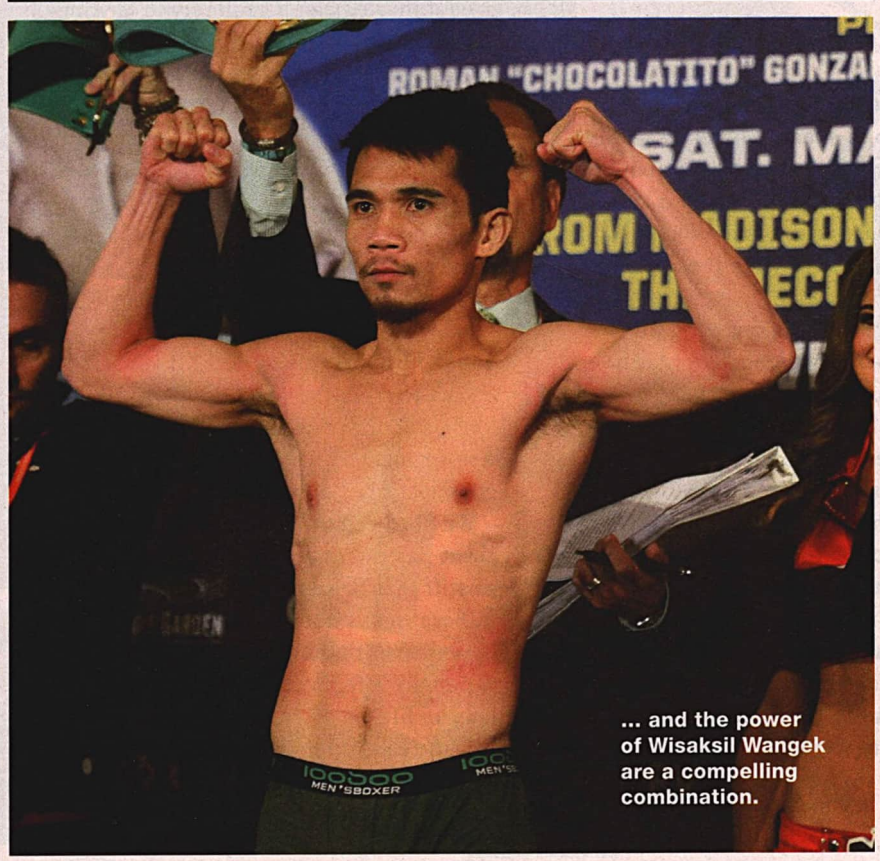
Manny Pacquiao jumped up from 112 pounds to 154, in my mind, because he had the body frame to do it. If you look at Pacquiao from the waist down, he has legs like a light heavyweight. Look at Henry Armstrong, too. That's what makes these guys special.

We just need to make sure those who do cheat pay the price. And that the penalty is so stiff that fighters don't even want to risk it. Because it's not just dangerous for their opponents. It's dangerous for them, too. It can really affect your organs and muscles later in life.

In the end, fights should be won and lost in the ring based on skills, not drugs. Hopefully we can rid this great sport of PEDs once and for all through mandatory testing.

The many talents of Naoya Inoue ...

NAOYA INOUE VS. WISAKSIL WANGEK


... and the power of Wisaksil Wangek are a compelling combination.

THREE EXPERTS – A FIGHTER, A TRAINER AND A MEDIA MEMBER – TELL YOU HOW A POTENTIAL MATCHUP WOULD PLAY OUT

Two elite-level junior bantamweights from Asia. Two pound-for-pound entrants. Two decidedly different paths to the same destination.

Naoya Inoue, from Japan, passed the eye test with flying colors and was fast-tracked. The fighter known as "Monster" was a world champion in only his sixth professional contest and, remarkably, a two-division ruler by his eighth. The reigning WBO titleholder at 115 pounds has quick hands, quick feet, crushing power and makes a real target of the body.

Conversely, Thailand's Wisaksil Wangek (aka Srisaket Sor Rungvisai) toiled in obscurity until the boxing world was forced to take notice of the southpaw power-puncher. In March, the former WBC 115-pound titleholder claimed a disputed decision over pound-for-pound star Roman Gonzalez to regain his old belt before sensationally knocking him out in their September rematch.

The landscape has changed at 115 pounds, but the division and the potential matchups to be made in it remain enthralling. Inoue and Wangek are two of the best fighters in the world. Japan and Thailand are two countries renowned for producing courageous combatants that leave it all in the ring.

Three boxing experts offer their opinions on a potential unification clash between two of Asia's most decorated warriors.

INOUE ★ TALE OF THE TAPE ★ WANGEK

115 POUNDS

INOUE		WANGEK
24	AGE	30
14-0 (12 KOS)	RECORD	44-4-1 (40 KOS)
86	KO PERCENTAGE	82
ORTHODOX	STANCE	SOUTHPAW
5 FEET 4½ INCHES (164 CM)	HEIGHT	5 FEET 3 INCHES (160 CM)
67½ INCHES (171 CM)	REACH	63½ INCHES (161 CM)

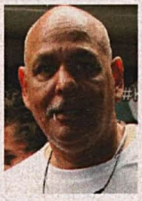
FIGHTER

KAL YAFAI

WBA junior bantamweight titleholder

Wangek has a very high knockout ratio and his power is his major strength. He's not much of a technical boxer. In fact, I don't think he threw a single jab in his rematch with Gonzalez. To fight someone like Wangek you need to break him down slowly and attack the body a lot. You need to box him, but you also need to hit with enough power to get his respect. Inoue looks good, but when he gets in with the top guys he'll tighten his defense up and vary his punches a bit more. He's technically sound and he looks like he can punch a bit too. I would have to edge towards Inoue in this fight because I think he'd be too cute defensively for Wangek. If the fight came off, I think Inoue could get him out late and I think he'd do it to the body. The way to deal with this guy is to throw straight back hands to the body and whack him round the sides when you can. That will slow him down and then you can break him up and take him out.

Prediction: INOUE



TRAINER

RUDY HERNANDEZ

Trainer of Carlos Cuadras

Wangek is a very good fighter. People have put a lot of emphasis on what Gonzalez didn't do in their fights, but they forget that Wangek has 40 knockouts in 44 wins. That's an amazing record. Carlos (Cuadras, who defeated Wangek in 2014) was surprised that Gonzalez picked (Wangek) as an opponent and thought it was a very dangerous fight. But, to me, Inoue is the man to beat in the division. He's the best and I think he stops Wangek. In Inoue's last fight (against Antonio Nieves) he had a guy who was in there to survive. When you see Inoue in there with the top guys, you'll see why he's one of the best fighters in this era. I'll go as far as to say that Inoue would have held his own in any era at this weight. He has speed, power and great fighting instincts. It would be a great fight with Wangek, but I think Inoue's youth and talent would be too much for him. He'll be able to read him, time him and counter him. Inoue would look impressive and he would knock Wangek out.

Prediction: INOUE

MEDIA

MARTIN MULCAHEY

Writer for THE RING

Inoue sees everything coming and processes things quicker than most fighters. At this weight class, I just don't see anyone who can beat him. Even before Gonzalez lost to Wangek, I didn't think Gonzalez could beat him. Inoue has that perfect combination of speed and athleticism. I've also said in the past that there are Mexican fighters out there who will be jealous of this guy's body-punching. I'm not sure Wangek is special. His wins over Gonzalez remind me of Iran Barkley beating Tommy Hearns twice. I just think it's a "styles make fights" thing where Wangek has Gonzalez's number. For me, if Wangek's power and pressure don't see him through in a fight, then he won't have a Plan B. And if he can't force Inoue to stand in front of him, he doesn't have a chance. The way to fight Wangek is to stick, move and counterpunch. Wangek won't have the feet to cope with Inoue. If he manages to cut Inoue, say with a headbutt, then that might be something, but this is an A-level fighter versus a B-level fighter. Inoue is better in every department.

Prediction: INOUE

WHAT'S IN A NAME

In 1921, a councilman in a largely Polish neighborhood in southwest Detroit secured $135,000 from the city to build a community center. By 1926, the brick building bore his name: Kronk.

On the Saturday night of October 7, 2017, firefighters did their best to save the structure but the flames were too high, the roof eventually collapsed and the blaze was written up as a suspected case of arson.

It's a funny thing. Councilman John Kronk himself might've imagined his last name on that building would speak to a legacy of dedication to the people of that neighborhood – and about that much he couldn't have been more spectacularly correct. He probably didn't imagine, though, that the "John" part would become a footnote and the rest, now more verb than surname, would become a brand that evoked the life's work of an African-American boxing trainer who turned the community center's basement into a champion forge.

Emanuel Steward's first pupil at Kronk was his younger brother James in 1969. A former national Golden Gloves champion himself, Steward became the official resident coach in 1971, set up shop in the asbestos-adorned bowels of the community center, cranked the thermostat to a permanent 95 degrees and got to work. From then until 2006, when Kronk was forced to close its doors after it couldn't afford to replace copper pipes taken by thieves, Steward provided a refuge for kids "fighting for their very lives" in the poverty that surrounded them.

But the Kronk was no summer camp with sing-alongs and face-painting. It was a fiercely insular gladiator pit which, once penetrated, became a boxer's best shot to know his real potential. The sparring ring was not a place people went to "work on a few things." They went to fight – and thank each other for it afterward. It was not a place that made *anything* easy, even breathing. "There's not as much oxygen in that hot gym and I think it's great for conditioning," Steward told Sports Illustrated in 1981.

It must have been true. From the beginning, Kronk's tight-knit fighters were recognized for their red and gold apparel (modeled after Marine Corps boxing robes) and dreaded for their inability to lose. Over time, too many names, too many titleholders emerged to list here, but two are crucial: Hilmer Kenty, who became Kronk's first world champion in 1980, and Thomas Hearns, who became its first superstar. Those names and scores of others inspired countless would-be champions, from the kids looking to escape the streets to the professionals looking for a piece of the Kronk mojo, to push past the sign that read, "This door has led many to pain and fame."

What's left of the building will probably be demolished, and that's sad, but don't mourn too long. It's just a building. "Kronk" became an idea and a mentality – something much more resilient and tall.

British soccer luminary **Rio Ferdinand** announced in September that he intends to become a professional boxer, thus trading a sport that prohibited the use of his hands for one that exclusively requires it. The 38-year-old retired in 2015 from a career that earned him widespread recognition as one of England's all-time best, his longest stretch being the 12 years he spent playing for Manchester United, where he won six Premier League titles. Ferdinand said he has always been interested in boxing but got serious about it when training helped him cope with the death of his wife. Perhaps taking his cues from another boxing novice, **Conor McGregor**, Ferdinand has already used Instagram to aim straight for the top of the U.K. heap, calling out heavyweights **Tony Bellew, David Haye** and **Anthony Joshua**.

At the annual WBC convention in October, the sanctioning body's president, **Mauricio Sulaiman**, announced that he has launched a six-month study to explore the idea of creating a new weight class: super heavyweight. His concern is that with modern heavyweights regularly approaching and exceeding 250 pounds, the "200 to infinity" class is unfair (and dangerous) to those on the low end. It's a premise that **Evander Holyfield, David Haye** and other successful small guys – as well as recordskeepers and pretty much everyone else who isn't the WBC's belt-maker – would probably reject.

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Pictured left to right: Damon Allen Jr., Jessie Vargas, Fernando Vargas

FIGHTER OF THE MONTH

WISAKSIL WANGEK

By **Michael Rosenthal**

Wisaksil Wangek one-upped himself in the rematch with Roman Gonzalez.

Roman Gonzalez might've moved up one too many weight classes. The little Nicaraguan hero might've engaged in one too many taxing battles, making him an old 30. Doesn't really matter much.

What Wisaksil Wangek did on September 9 in Carson, California, was remarkable.

Wangek (aka Srisaket Sor Rungvisai) stunned the boxing world by outpointing the then-No. 1 fighter pound-for-pound in March for a junior bantamweight title, although the decision was hotly disputed.

There was nothing disputed about the rematch. Wangek put Gonzalez down with a short right in Round 4 and then put Gonzalez out with a right hook in the same round, leaving him semiconscious on his back.

The moment was jaw-dropping, especially when you consider who was knocked out.

Six months earlier, before their first meeting in New York, Gonzalez, a four-division titleholder, was the toast of boxing. On that night in Carson, he was toast. He was contemplating retirement.

Gonzalez's deficiencies probably did play a role in his demise. He was naturally too small for the 115-pound division. At least that's the prevailing wisdom.

That shouldn't detract from what Wangek did, though. The Thai fighter, who had a good track record going into his fights with Gonzalez, is a talented, strong junior bantamweight. No one should be surprised when he scores a knockout: He is 44-4-1, with 40 stoppages.

In other words, Wisaksil Wangek is a damn good fighter. He simply had the opportunity to prove it against one of the most respected names in the sport. RING

POUND FOR POUND: Roman Gonzalez had fallen from No. 1 to No. 4 after his first fight against Wisaksil Wangek (unrated), but the fourth-round KO he suffered in the rematch sealed his departure. After the resulting shift, Errol Spence Jr. took the opening at No. 10. Then came another shock as No. 1-rated Andre Ward retired. Everyone moved up and Gennady Golovkin (No. 2 last month) inherited the throne while Wangek was rewarded for his victory with a seat at No. 10.

HEAVYWEIGHTS: Luis Ortiz (No. 4 last month) tested positive for a banned substance and was dismissed, leaving an opening at No. 10 for former cruiserweight titleholder Tony Bellew.

CRUISERWEIGHTS: No. 1 Oleksandr Usyk booted longtime resident Marco Huck (No. 7 last month) off the list with a 10th-round TKO in Berlin. The same week, 47-year-old Firat Arslan (No. 8 last month) was dropped due to a lack of meaningful performances lately. Those departures left two vacant spaces, which were given to Dmitry Kudryashov (No. 9) and Yunier Dorticos (No. 10). The twain then met and Dorticos knocked out Kudryashov in two rounds. The Cuban went to No. 6 and the Russian exited as Andrew Tabiti arrived at No. 10. Finally, Bellew (No. 3 last month) made his rematch against heavyweight David Haye official, which meant he was out and Maksim Vlasov was in at No. 10.

LIGHT HEAVYWEIGHTS: The championship was left vacant by Ward's retirement.

SUPER MIDDLEWEIGHTS: David Benavidez captured a belt and stepped up from No. 9 to No. 8 after outpointing Ronald Gavril (unrated). Callum Smith won a unanimous decision over Erik Skoglund (unrated) and rose from No. 5 to No. 4. Chris Eubank Jr. then did his part with an impressive third-round stoppage of Avni Yildirim (unrated) and rose from No. 7 to No. 5.

MIDDLEWEIGHTS: Avtandil Khurtsidze, who was among the many suspects indicted in June as part of an organized crime sting, has concerns more serious than his RING ranking, but he was ejected from his spot at No. 5 nonetheless and Luis Arias entered at No. 10.

JUNIOR MIDDLEWEIGHTS: No change.

WELTERWEIGHTS: No change.

JUNIOR WELTERWEIGHTS: Viktor Postol (No. 1 last month) returned from a layoff and got up from a knockdown to outpoint unrated Jamshidbek Najmiddinov. It wasn't enough to justify sitting above Mikey Garcia (No. 2) in the ratings any longer, so Postol and Garcia swapped places.

LIGHTWEIGHTS: Luke Campbell (unrated last month) lost a split decision to division champion Jorge Linares, but on the strength of his performance was installed at No. 10, replacing Dejan Zlaticanin. Anthony Crolla (No. 9 last month) was given a one-spot promotion for beating Ricky Burns (unrated) by unanimous decision, but actually went to No. 7 after Sharif Bogere (No. 6 last month) was removed for inactivity. The shift also allowed Zlaticanin to return at No. 10.

JUNIOR LIGHTWEIGHTS: Eduardo Hernandez, already 24-0-3 (20 KOs) at just 19 years old, replaced Robinson Castellanos at No. 10 after knocking out Raul Centeno (unrated) in three rounds.

FEATHERWEIGHTS: Jesus Rojas KO'd Claudio Marrero (unrated) in the seventh round and entered at No. 10, with Jorge Lara (No. 9) moving out to make room.

JUNIOR FEATHERWEIGHTS: Shun Kubo (No. 9 last month) dropped out after getting stopped in nine rounds while his conqueror, Daniel Roman, came in at No. 8. Roman's spot had previously been occupied by Yukinori Oguni, who lost it and his belt via sixth-round stoppage to Ryosuke Iwasa, who entered at No. 9. Diego De La Hoya was impressive in a unanimous decision win against Randy Caballero (unrated) and was elevated from No. 6 to No. 4. Then Nonito Donaire (No. 5 last month) went to featherweight and Cesar Juarez moved in at No. 10.

BANTAMWEIGHTS: Luis Nery (champion last month) was stripped and removed from the list after his B-sample confirmed a failed drug test related to his win over then-champion Shinsuke Yamanaka in August. Yamanaka, who had dropped to No. 5 as a result of the loss, was reinstated at the top and the resulting shift made room for France's Nordine Oubaali at No. 10. Oubaali's tenure only lasted a week, as he was replaced by Paul Butler after the Brit widely outpointed Stuart Hall (unrated).

JUNIOR BANTAMWEIGHTS: Luis Concepcion (No. 9 last month) lost a decision to unrated Iran Diaz and dropped out, which ushered in Johnriel Casimero at No. 10. Then, after the dust settled at the "Superfly" event in Carson, California, Gonzalez plummeted from No. 3 to No. 8 as a result of getting KO'd by No. 2 Wangek. At the same time, Juan Francisco Estrada climbed from No. 5 to No. 3 on the merit of a hard-fought unanimous decision over Carlos Cuadras, who held his rank at No. 4. The following week, Jonas Sultan outpointed Casimero and took his spot at No. 10. Rex Tso then won a technical decision over Kohei Kono (No. 9 at the time) and entered at No. 10. Kono dropped out.

FLYWEIGHTS: No change.

JUNIOR FLYWEIGHTS: Kosei Tanaka (No. 2 last month) vaulted to No. 1 after impressively defending his title with a ninth-round stoppage of Rangsan Chayanram (unrated). Milan Melindo also rose a spot, from No. 4 to No. 3, and kept his belt with an entertaining split decision over Hekkie Budler, who slipped from No. 9 to No. 10.

STRAWWEIGHTS: No change.

Joseph Parker (right) retained his title against Hughie Fury, but the victory was tainted by bizarre scorecards.

THE FIGURES UNDER THE FIGHTERS' NAMES INDICATE: WEEKS IN THE RATINGS • COUNTRY • RECORD

HEAVYWEIGHTS
WEIGHT UNLIMITED

C TYSON FURY
295 • U.K. • 25-0-0 (18 KOs)

1. ANTHONY JOSHUA
102 • U.K. • 19-0-0 (19 KOs)

2. DEONTAY WILDER
203 • U.S. • 38-0-0 (37 KOs)

3. KUBRAT PULEV
313 • Bulgaria • 25-1-0 (13 KOs)

4. JOSEPH PARKER
79 • New Zealand • 24-0-0 (18 KOs)

5. ALEXANDER POVETKIN
15 • Russia • 32-1-0 (23 KOs)

6. ANDY RUIZ JR.
71 • Mexico • 29-1-0 (19 KOs)

7. DILLIAN WHYTE
43 • U.K. • 21-1-0 (16 KOs)

8. DOMINIC BREAZEALE
33 • U.S. • 18-1-0 (16 KOs)

9. JARRELL MILLER
10 • U.S. • 19-0-1 (17 KOS)

10. TONY BELLEW
2 • U.K. • 29-2-1 (19 KOs)

CRUISERWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 200 LBS

C (VACANT)

1. OLEKSANDR USYK
106 • Ukraine • 13-0-0 (11 KOs)

2. MURAT GASSIEV
48 • Russia • 24-0-0 (17 KOs)

3. MAIRIS BRIEDIS
85 • Latvia • 23-0-0 (18 KOs)

4. DENIS LEBEDEV
402 • Russia • 30-2-0 (22 KOs)

5. YUNIER DORTICOS
5 • Cuba • 22-0-0 (21 KOs)

6. KRZYSZTOF GLOWACKI
113 • Poland • 28-1-0 (18 KOs)

7. ILUNGA MAKABU
222 • Congo • 21-2-0 (20 KOs)

8. KRZYSZTOF WLODARCZYK
21 • Poland • 53-3-1 (37 KOs)

9. ANDREW TABITI
3 • U.S. • 15-0-0 (12 KOs)

10. MAKSIM VLASOV
2 • Russia • 40-2-0 (23 KOs)

LIGHT HEAVYWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 175 LBS

C (VACANT)

1. ADONIS STEVENSON
227 • Canada • 29-1-0 (24 KOs)

2. SERGEY KOVALEV
247 • Russia • 30-2-1 (26 KOs)

3. ELEIDER ALVAREZ
187 • Colombia • 23-0-0 (11 KOs)

4. OLEKSANDR GVOZDYK
47 • Ukraine • 14-0-0 (12 KOs)

5. ARTUR BETERBIEV
148 • Russia • 11-0-0 (11 KOs)

6. SULLIVAN BARRERA
43 • Cuba • 20-1-0 (14 KOs)

7. DMITRY BIVOL
17 • Russia • 11-0-0 (9 KOs)

8. BADOU JACK
7 • Sweden • 22-1-2 (13 KOs)

9. MARCUS BROWNE
34 • U.S. • 20-0-0 (15 KOs)

10. JOE SMITH JR.
69 • U.S. • 23-2-0 (19 KOs)

SUPER MIDDLEWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 168 LBS

C (VACANT)

1. JAMES DEGALE
227 • U.K. • 23-1-1 (14 KOs)

2. GILBERTO RAMIREZ
170 • Mexico • 36-0-0 (24 KOs)

3. GEORGE GROVES
305 • U.K. • 26-3-0 (19 KOs)

4. CALLUM SMITH
123 • U.K. • 23-0-0 (17 KOs)

5. CHRIS EUBANK JR.
13 • U.K. • 26-1-0 (20 KOs)

6. ANDRE DIRRELL
163 • U.S. • 26-2-0 (16 KOs)

7. ANTHONY DIRRELL
165 • U.S. • 30-1-1 (24 KOs)

8. DAVID BENAVIDEZ
21 • U.S. • 19-0-0 (17 KOs)

9. TYRON ZEUGE
48 • Germany • 21-0-1 (11 KOs)

10. JESSE HART
20 • U.S. • 22-1-0 (18 KOs)

Rex Features via AP Images

MIDDLEWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 160 LBS

C **CANELO ALVAREZ**
99 • Mexico • 49-1-2 (34 KOs)

1. **GENNADY GOLOVKIN**
305 • Kaz. • 37-0-1 (33 KOs)
2. **DANIEL JACOBS**
148 • U.S. • 32-2-0 (29 KOs)
3. **DAVID LEMIEUX**
124 • Canada • 38-3-0 (33 KOs)
4. **BILLY JOE SAUNDERS**
150 • U.K. • 25-0-0 (12 KOs)
5. **SERGIY DEREVYANCHENKO**
27 • Ukraine • 11-0-0 (9 KOs)
6. **ANDY LEE**
148 • Ireland • 35-3-1 (24 KOs)
7. **HASSAN N'DAM**
195 • Cameroon • 36-2-0 (21 KOs)
8. **RYOTA MURATA**
41 • Japan • 12-1-0 (9 KOs)
9. **JERMALL CHARLO**
11 • U.S. • 26-0-0 (20 KOs)
10. **LUIS ARIAS**
3 • U.S. • 18-0-0 (9 KOs)

JR. MIDDLEWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 154 LBS

C **(VACANT)**

1. **ERISLANDY LARA**
328 • Cuba • 24-2-2 (14 KOs)
2. **JERMELL CHARLO**
205 • U.S. • 29-0-0 (14 KOs)
3. **MIGUEL COTTO**
99 • P.R. • 41-5-0 (33 KOs)
4. **DEMETRIUS ANDRADE**
104 • U.S. • 24-0-0 (16 KOs)
5. **AUSTIN TROUT**
279 • U.S. • 30-3-0 (17 KOs)
6. **JARRETT HURD**
48 • U.S. • 20-0-0 (14 KOs)
7. **LIAM SMITH**
109 • U.K. • 25-1-1 (14 KOs)
8. **ERICKSON LUBIN**
32 • U.S. • 18-0-0 (13 KOs)
9. **BRIAN CASTANO**
15 • Argentina • 14-0-0 (10 KOs)
10. **MICHEL SORO**
43 • France • 30-2-1 (20 KOs)

WELTERWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 147 LBS

C **(VACANT)**

1. **KEITH THURMAN**
240 • U.S. • 28-0-0 (22 KOs)
2. **ERROL SPENCE**
106 • U.S. • 22-0-0 (19 KOs)
3. **SHAWN PORTER**
201 • U.S. • 27-2-1 (17 KOs)
4. **KELL BROOK**
338 • U.K. • 36-2-0 (25 KOs)
5. **DANNY GARCIA**
115 • U.S. • 33-1-0 (19 KOs)
6. **LAMONT PETERSON**
34 • U.S. • 35-3-1 (17 KOs)
7. **LUCAS MATTHYSSE**
19 • Argentina • 38-4-0 (35 KOs)
8. **JEFF HORN**
15 • Australia • 17-0-1 (11 KOs)
9. **MANNY PACQUIAO**
49 • Phil. • 59-7-2 (38 KOs)
10. **JESSIE VARGAS**
84 • U.S. • 27-2-0 (10 KOs)

JR. WELTERWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 140 LBS

C **TERENCE CRAWFORD**
130 • U.S. • 32-0-0 (23 KOs)

1. **MIKEY GARCIA**
11 • U.S. • 37-0-0 (30 KOs)
2. **VIKTOR POSTOL**
217 • Ukraine • 29-1-0 (12 KOs)
3. **ANTONIO OROZCO**
106 • U.S. • 26-0-0 (17 KOs)
4. **REGIS PROGRAIS**
64 • U.S. • 20-0-0 (17 KOs)
5. **ADRIAN GRANADOS**
84 • U.S. • 18-5-2 (12 KOs)
6. **JULIUS INDONGO**
45 • Namibia • 22-1-0 (11 KOs)
7. **EDUARD TROYANOVSKY**
98 • Russia • 26-1-0 (23 KOs)
8. **SERGEY LIPINETS**
44 • Russia • 12-0-0 (10 KOs)
9. **RANCES BARTHELEMY**
21 • Cuba • 26-0-0 (13 KOs)
10. **JOSH TAYLOR**
14 • U.K. • 10-0-0 (9 KOs)

LIGHTWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 135 LBS

C **JORGE LINARES**
188 • Venezuela • 43-3-0 (27 KOs)

1. **MIKEY GARCIA**
37 • U.S. • 37-0-0 (30 KOs)
2. **TERRY FLANAGAN**
105 • U.K. • 33-0-0 (13 KOs)
3. **ROBERT EASTER**
80 • U.S. • 20-0-0 (14 KOs)
4. **DENIS SHAFIKOV**
131 • Russia • 38-3-1 (20 KOs)
5. **RAYMUNDO BELTRAN**
27 • Mexico • 34-7-1 (21 KOs)
6. **RICHARD COMMEY**
124 • Ghana • 25-2-0 (22 KOs)
7. **ANTHONY CROLLA**
103 • U.K. • 32-6-3 (13 KOs)
8. **FELIX VERDEJO**
78 • Puerto Rico • 23-0-0 (15 KOs)
9. **LUKE CAMPBELL**
3 • U.K. • 17-2-0 (14 KOs)
10. **DEJAN ZLATICANIN**
1 • Montenegro • 22-1-0 (15 KOs)

JR. LIGHTWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 130 LBS

C **(VACANT)**

1. **VASYL LOMACHENKO**
70 • Ukraine • 9-1-0 (7 KOs)
2. **MIGUEL BERCHELT**
37 • Mexico • 32-1-0 (28 KOs)
3. **JEZREEL CORRALES**
76 • Panama • 22-1-0 (8 KOs)
4. **ORLANDO SALIDO**
160 • Mexico • 44-13-4 (31 KOs)
5. **GERVONTA DAVIS**
39 • U.S. • 19-0-0 (18 KOs)
6. **FRANCISCO VARGAS**
170 • Mexico • 23-1-2 (17 KOs)
7. **TEVIN FARMER**
27 • U.S. • 25-4-1 (5 KOs)
8. **JHONNY GONZALEZ**
12 • Mexico • 64-10-0 (54 KOs)
9. **EDNER CHERRY**
11 • U.S. • 36-7-2 (19 KOs)
10. **EDUARDO HERNANDEZ**
6 • Mexico • 24-0-3 (20 KOs)

FEATHERWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 126 LBS

C **(VACANT)**

1. **LEO SANTA CRUZ**
111 • U.S. • 33-1-1 (18 KOs)
2. **GARY RUSSELL JR.**
133 • U.S. • 28-1-0 (17 KOs)
3. **CARL FRAMPTON**
63 • U.K. • 23-1-0 (14 KOs)
4. **LEE SELBY**
187 • U.K. • 25-1-0 (9 KOs)
5. **ABNER MARES**
232 • Mexico • 30-2-1 (15 KOs)
6. **OSCAR VALDEZ**
79 • Mexico • 23-0-0 (19 KOs)
7. **JOSEPH DIAZ JR.**
81 • U.S. • 25-0-0 (13 KOs)
8. **JESUS CUELLAR**
158 • Argentina • 28-2-0 (21 KOs)
9. **SCOTT QUIGG**
7 • U.K. • 33-1-2 (24 KOs)
10. **JESUS ROJAS**
4 • P.R. • 26-1-2 (19 KOs)

JR. FEATHERWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 122 LBS

C **(VACANT)**

1. **GUILLERMO RIGONDEAUX**
362 • Cuba • 17-0-0 (11 KOs)
2. **JESSIE MAGDALENO**
122 • U.S. • 25-0-0 (18 KOs)
3. **REY VARGAS**
148 • Mexico • 30-0-0 (22 KOs)
4. **DIEGO DE LA HOYA**
63 • Mexico • 20-0-0 (9 KOs)
5. **MOISES FLORES**
66 • Mexico • 25-0-0 (17 KOs)
6. **HUGO RUIZ**
44 • Mexico • 36-4-0 (32 KOs)
7. **DANIEL ROMAN**
4 • U.S. • 23-2-1 (9 KOs)
8. **RYOSUKE IWASA**
4 • Japan • 24-2-0 (16 KOs)
9. **JULIO CEJA**
20 • Mexico • 31-2-0 (28 KOs)
10. **CESAR JUAREZ**
3 • Mexico • 20-5-0 (15 KOs)

HOW OUR RATINGS ARE COMPILED

Championship vacancies can be filled in the following two ways: 1. THE RING's Nos. 1 and 2 contenders fight one another. 2. If the Nos. 1 and 2 contenders choose not to fight one another and No. 1 fights No. 3, that matchup could be for the RING title if the Editorial Board deems No. 3 worthy.

A champion can lose his belt in six situations: 1. The Champion loses a fight in the weight class in which he is champion; 2. The Champion moves to another weight class; 3. The Champion does not schedule a fight in any weight class for 18 months, although injuries and certain other unforeseen circumstances could be taken into consideration; 4. The Champion does not schedule a fight at his championship weight for 18 months (even if he fights at another weight); 5. The Champion does not schedule a fight with a Top-5 contender from any weight class for two years; 6. The Champion retires.

THE RING Editorial Board considers input from the Ratings Panel of boxing journalists from around the world and then decides collectively what changes will be made. That applies to both the pound-for-pound and divisional ratings.

Records provided by boxrec.com

RATINGS

BANTAMWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 118 LBS

C SHINSUKE YAMANAKA
310 • Japan • 27-1-2 (19 KOs)

1. JAMIE MCDONNELL
232 • U.K. • 29-2-1 (13 KOs)

2. JUAN CARLOS PAYANO
159 • Dom. Rep. • 19-1-0 (9 KOs)

3. ZHANAT ZHAKIYANOV
35 • Kaz. • 27-1-0 (18 KOs)

4. ZOLANI TETE
83 • S. Africa • 25-3-0 (20 KOs)

5. RYAN BURNETT
18 • U.K. • 17-0-0 (9 KOs)

6. LIBORIO SOLIS
31 • Venezuela • 25-5-1 (11 KOs)

7. LEE HASKINS
122 • U.K. • 34-4-0 (14 KOs)

8. EMMANUEL RODRIGUEZ
25 • P.R. • 17-0-0 (12 KOs)

9. OSCAR NEGRETE
11 • Colombia • 17-0-0 (7 KOs)

10. PAUL BUTLER
2 • U.K. • 25-1-0 (13 KOs)

JR. BANTAMWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 115 LBS

C (VACANT)

1. NAOYA INOUE
145 • Japan • 14-0-0 (12 KOs)

2. WISAKSIL WANGEK
232 • Thailand • 44-4-1 (40 KOs)

3. JUAN FRANCISCO ESTRADA
53 • Mexico • 36-2-0 (25 KOs)

4. CARLOS CUADRAS
281 • Mexico • 36-2-1 (27 KOs)

5. KHALID YAFAI
83 • U.K. • 22-0-0 (14 KOs)

6. JERWIN ANCAJAS
59 • Phil. • 27-1-1 (18 KOs)

7. RAU'SHEE WARREN
11 • U.S. • 15-2-0 (4 KOs)

8. ROMAN GONZALEZ
57 • Nicaragua • 46-2-0 (38 KOs)

9. JONAS SULTAN
4 • Phil. • 14-3-0 (9 KOs)

10. REX TSO
1 • China • 22-0-0 (13 KOs)

FLYWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 112 LBS

C (VACANT)

1. KAZUTO IOKA
161 • Japan • 22-1-0 (13 KOs)

2. DONNIE NIETES
55 • Phil. • 40-1-4 (22 KOs)

3. DAIGO HIGA
54 • Japan • 13-0-0 (13 KOs)

4. JUAN CARLOS REVECO
315 • Argentina • 39-3-0 (19 KOs)

5. VINCENT LEGRAND
35 • France • 25-0-0 (15 KOs)

6. MORUTI MTHALANE
24 • S. Africa • 34-2-0 (23 KOs)

7. ANDREW SELBY
19 • U.K. • 10-0-0 (5 KOs)

8. FRANCISCO RODRIGUEZ JR.
17 • Mexico • 24-4-1 (16 KOs)

9. MASAYUKI KURODA
12 • Japan • 27-7-3 (15 KOs)

10. SHO KIMURA
11 • Japan • 15-1-2 (8 KOs)

JR. FLYWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 108 LBS

C (VACANT)

1. KOSEI TANAKA
41 • Japan • 10-0-0 (6 KOs)

2. PEDRO GUEVARA
237 • Mexico • 30-2-1 (17 KOs)

3. MILAN MELINDO
152 • Phil. • 37-2-0 (13 KOs)

4. RYOICHI TAGUCHI
148 • Japan • 26-2-2 (12 KOs)

5. CARLOS CANIZALES
40 • Venezuela • 19-0-1 (16 KOs)

6. KEN SHIRO
46 • Japan • 10-0-0 (5 KOs)

7. GANIGAN LOPEZ
84 • Mexico • 28-7-0 (17 KOs)

8. RANDY PETALCORIN
179 • Phil. • 27-2-1 (20 KOs)

9. AKIRA YAEGASHI
93 • Japan • 25-6-0 (13 KOs)

10. HEKKIE BUDLER
51 • S. Africa • 31-3-0 (10 KOs)

STRAWWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 105 LBS

C (VACANT)

1. CHAYAPHON MOONSRI
330 • Thailand • 48-0-0 (17 KOs)

2. THAMMANOON NIYOMTRONG
158 • Thailand • 16-0-0 (7 KOs)

3. BYRON ROJAS
82 • Nicaragua • 21-3-3 (9 KOs)

4. HIROTO KYOGUCHI
26 • Japan • 8-0-0 (6 KOs)

5. JOSE ARGUMEDO
93 • Mexico • 20-4-1 (12 KOs)

6. CARLOS BUITRAGO
261 • Nicaragua • 30-2-1 (17 KOs)

7. RYUYA YAMANAKA
48 • Japan • 15-2-0 (4 KOs)

8. SIMPHIWE KHONCO
51 • S. Africa • 18-5-0 (7 KOs)

9. TATSUYA FUKUHARA
23 • Japan • 19-5-6 (7 KOs)

10. LEROY ESTRADA
20 • Panama • 16-2-0 (6 KOs)

POUND FOR POUND

1. GENNADY GOLOVKIN
139 • Kazakhstan • 37-0-1 (33 KOs)

2. TERENCE CRAWFORD
128 • U.S. • 32-0-0 (23 KOs)

3. VASYL LOMACHENKO
69 • Ukraine • 9-1-0 (7 KOs)

4. GUILLERMO RIGONDEAUX
216 • Cuba • 17-0-0 (11 KOs)

5. SERGEY KOVALEV
135 • Russia • 30-2-1 (26 KOs)

6. CANELO ALVAREZ
99 • Mexico • 49-1-2 (34 KOs)

7. MIKEY GARCIA
11 • U.S. • 37-0-0 (30 KOs)

8. NAOYA INOUE
8 • Japan • 14-0-0 (12 KOs)

9. ERROL SPENCE JR.
5 • U.S. • 22-0-0 (19 KOs)

10. WISAKSIL WANGEK
3 • Thailand • 44-4-1 (40 KOs)

THE RING POLICY ON RATED BOXERS WHO TEST POSITIVE FOR PERFORMANCE-ENHANCING DRUGS

THE RING will remove from its ratings any rated boxer — including a champion — if such boxer at some point undergoes drug testing (Olympic-style or otherwise) and that boxer tests positive for a performance-enhancing drug.

In the event that a boxer has undergone testing in which the boxer provides two samples ("A" and "B") and the boxer's "A" and subsequent "B" samples test positive for a performance-enhancing drug or if his "A" sample tests positive and he waives his right to have the "B" sample tested, then the boxer shall immediately be removed from the ratings.

A boxer whose "A" sample tested positive and is awaiting the results of his "B" sample will not be allowed to fight for a championship or rise in the ratings.

A boxer who is removed because of a positive test will have the opportunity to earn his way back into the ratings after any suspension period is completed.

A boxer who is dropped also may be reinstated if the testing agency subsequently reverses its decision or a court of competent jurisdiction finds that the test result was invalid.

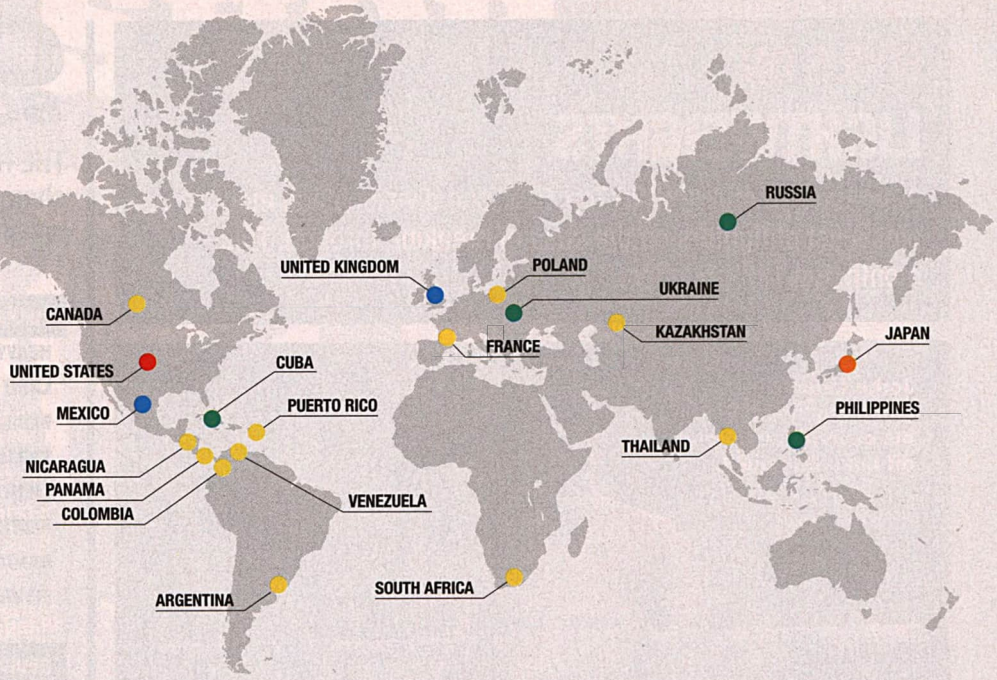
RATED FIGHTERS BY COUNTRY

●	UNITED STATES	40	▲ 2
●	UNITED KINGDOM	24	▲ 2
●	MEXICO	23	▼ 1
●	JAPAN	15	▼ 2
●	RUSSIA	10	▲ 1
●	PHILIPPINES	6	
●	CUBA	5	
●	UKRAINE	5	
●	ARGENTINA	4	
●	PUERTO RICO	4	▲ 1
●	SOUTH AFRICA	4	
●	NICARAGUA	3	
●	THAILAND	3	
●	VENEZUELA	3	
●	CANADA	2	
●	COLOMBIA	2	
●	FRANCE	2	
●	KAZAKHSTAN	2	
●	PANAMA	2	▲ 1
●	POLAND	2	
	AUSTRALIA	1	
	BULGARIA	1	
	CAMEROON	1	
	CHINA	1	▲ 1
	CONGO	1	
	DOMINICAN REPUBLIC	1	
	GERMANY	1	▼ 2
	GHANA	1	
	IRELAND	1	
	LATVIA	1	
	MONTENEGRO	1	
	NAMIBIA	1	
	NEW ZEALAND	1	
	SWEDEN	1	

Countries out (from last month): Georgia (Avtandil Khurtsidze), Uganda (Sharif Bogere)

Countries in: China (Rex Tso)

Note: Mikey Garcia of the U.S. is rated in two divisions, junior welterweight and lightweight.



ARE YOU EXPERIENCED?

Who has the most professional rounds under their belt? Here's a division-by-division breakdown (rounds in parentheses) as well as the total split among these 17 fighters:

HEAVYWEIGHTS	TONY BELLEW	(211)
CRUISERWEIGHTS	K. WLODARCZYK	(356)
LIGHT HEAVYWEIGHTS	ELEIDER ALVAREZ	(156)
SUPER MIDDLEWEIGHTS	GILBERTO RAMIREZ	(193)
MIDDLEWEIGHTS	CANELO ALVAREZ	(365)
JUNIOR MIDDLEWEIGHTS	MIGUEL COTTO	(333)
WELTERWEIGHTS	MANNY PACQUIAO	(455)
JUNIOR WELTERWEIGHTS	VIKTOR POSTOL	(232)
LIGHTWEIGHTS	JORGE LINARES	(280)
JUNIOR LIGHTWEIGHTS	ORLANDO SALIDO	(426)
FEATHERWEIGHTS	ABNER MARES	(252)
JUNIOR FEATHERWEIGHTS	HUGO RUIZ	(154)
BANTAMWEIGHTS	LEE HASKINS	(243)
JUNIOR BANTAMWEIGHTS	ROMAN GONZALEZ	(233)
FLYWEIGHTS	DONNIE NIETES	(327)
JUNIOR FLYWEIGHTS	MILAN MELINDO	(288)
STRAWWEIGHTS	C. MOONSRI	(382)
TOTAL ROUNDS		4,886

STATES OF THE GAME

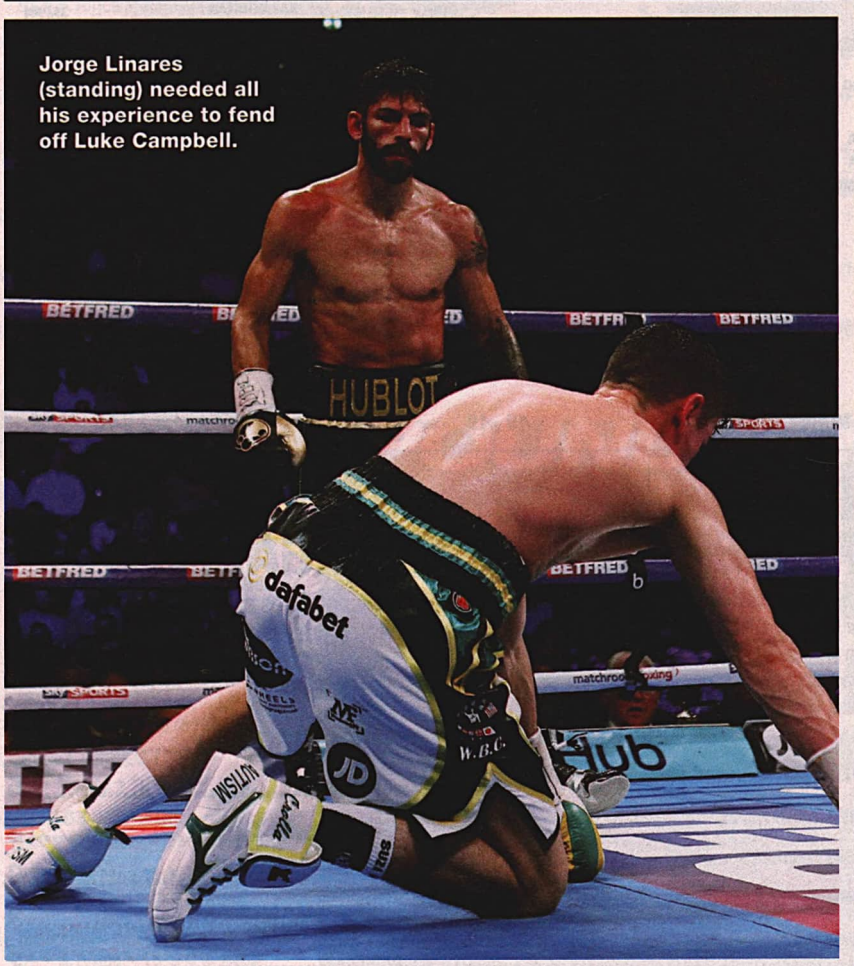
Seventeen states and the District of Columbia are represented by our rated fighters from the U.S. Here's how it breaks down:

CALIFORNIA	7
NEW YORK	5
FLORIDA	3
OHIO	3
PENNSYLVANIA	3
D.C.	2
ILLINOIS	2
MARYLAND	2
MICHIGAN	2
TEXAS	2
ALABAMA	1
ARIZONA	1
LOUISIANA	1
NEBRASKA	1
NEVADA	1
NEW MEXICO	1
RHODE ISLAND	1
WISCONSIN	1

FOCUS ON . . .

LIGHTWEIGHTS

A breakdown of THE RING Top 10 in one division each month, plus a list of fighters on the cusp of breaking through. This month: the 135-pounders.



Jorge Linares (standing) needed all his experience to fend off Luke Campbell.

MOST WEEKS RATED: JORGE LINARES **188**

FEWEST WEEKS RATED: DEJAN ZLATICANIN **1**

OLDEST: RAYMUNDO BELTRAN **36**

YOUNGEST: FELIX VERDEJO **24**

MOST FIGHTS: LINARES **46**

FEWEST FIGHTS: LUKE CAMPBELL **19**

HIGHEST WINNING PERCENTAGE: ROBERT EASTER, TERRY FLANAGAN, MIKEY GARCIA, VERDEJO **100 PERCENT**

LOWEST WINNING PERCENTAGE: ANTHONY CROLLA **78 PERCENT**

MOST KOS: GARCIA **30**

FEWEST KOS: CROLLA, FLANAGAN **13**

LONGEST CURRENT WINNING STREAK: GARCIA **33 FIGHTS**

ON THE POUND-FOR-POUND LIST: GARCIA **NO. 7**

TITLEHOLDERS IN THE TOP 10: EASTER **(IBF)**, FLANAGAN **(WBO)**, GARCIA **(WBC)**, LINARES **(RING, WBA)**

ON THE CUSP (IN ALPHABETICAL ORDER): JAVIER FORTUNA, RYAN MARTIN, XOLISANI NDONGENI, EMMANUEL TAGOE, DAUD YORDAN

OLD SCHOOL 8

THE RING staff members' current champions in the original eight weight classes.

MICHAEL ROSENTHAL RING MAGAZINE EDITOR

HEAVYWEIGHT: TYSON FURY
LIGHT HEAVYWEIGHT: ADONIS STEVENSON
MIDDLEWEIGHT: GENNADY GOLOVKIN
WELTERWEIGHT: TERENCE CRAWFORD
LIGHTWEIGHT: VASYL LOMACHENKO
FEATHERWEIGHT: LEO SANTA CRUZ
BANTAMWEIGHT: NAOYA INOUE
FLYWEIGHT: KAZUTO IOKA

DOUG FISCHER RINGTV.COM EDITOR

HEAVYWEIGHT: ANTHONY JOSHUA
LIGHT HEAVYWEIGHT: ADONIS STEVENSON
MIDDLEWEIGHT: GENNADY GOLOVKIN
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BANTAMWEIGHT: NAOYA INOUE
FLYWEIGHT: KAZUTO IOKA

BRIAN HARTY RING MAGAZINE MANAGING EDITOR

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LIGHTWEIGHT: VASYL LOMACHENKO
FEATHERWEIGHT: LEO SANTA CRUZ
BANTAMWEIGHT: NAOYA INOUE
FLYWEIGHT: DONNIE NIETES

MIKE COPPINGER SENIOR WRITER

HEAVYWEIGHT: ANTHONY JOSHUA
LIGHT HEAVYWEIGHT: ADONIS STEVENSON
MIDDLEWEIGHT: GENNADY GOLOVKIN
WELTERWEIGHT: TERENCE CRAWFORD
LIGHTWEIGHT: VASYL LOMACHENKO
FEATHERWEIGHT: LEO SANTA CRUZ
BANTAMWEIGHT: JUAN FRANCISCO ESTRADA
FLYWEIGHT: KAZUTO IOKA

Note: *This is how the weights break down: Heavyweight includes cruiserweight, light heavyweight includes super middleweight, all divisions middleweight through flyweight include the "junior" versions, and flyweight also includes strawweight.*

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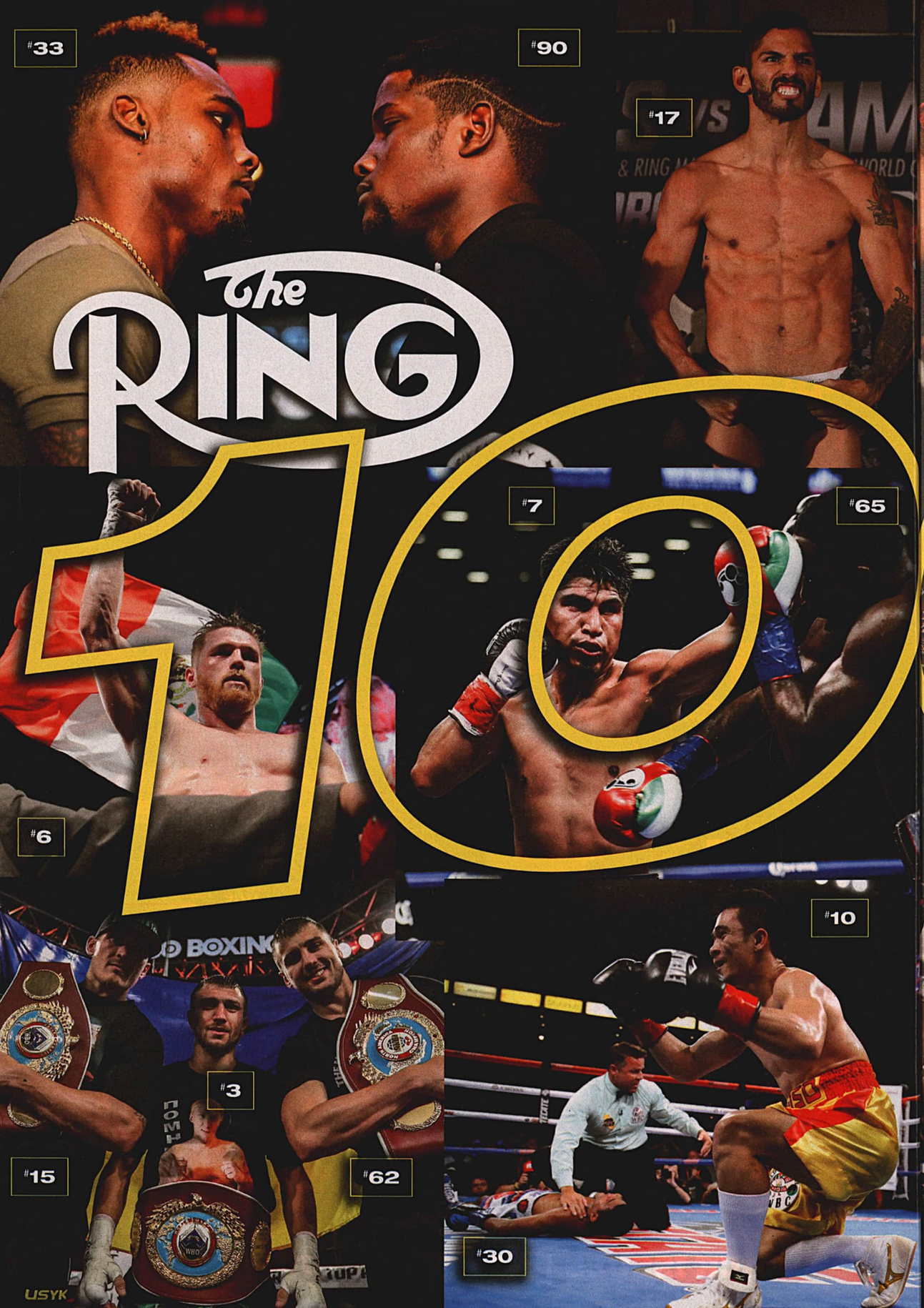


Among those in the RING 100 are (top row, left to right) Jermell Charlo, Erickson Lubin, Jorge Linares, Danny Garcia, Keith Thurman, Anthony Joshua, (second row) Canelo Alvarez, Mikey Garcia, Adrien Broner, Terence Crawford, (bottom row) Oleksandr Usyk, Vasyl Lomachenko, Oleksandr Gvozdyk, Roman Gonzalez, Wisaksil Wangek, Badou Jack and Naoya Inoue.

OUR ANNUAL RANKING OF THE BEST FIGHTERS IN THE WORLD

Compiled by **DAVID GREISMAN, MARTIN MULCAHEY AND ANSON WAINWRIGHT**

Written by **DAVID GREISMAN**

Gennady Golovkin is the new No. 1 guy by accomplishment, though also by attrition.

Earlier this year, Roman Gonzalez lost a debated decision to Wisaksil Wangek and the No. 1 spot he had twice held on this list. That pushed Andre Ward to the top, thanks in large part to Ward's own debated decision over Sergey Kovalev and his long tenure as one of the best boxers in the world. Ward affirmed his standing when he stopped Kovalev in their rematch.

And then he abdicated the throne.

Ward's retirement caused another deserving name to rise. Gennady Golovkin had been No. 2. His draw with Canelo Alvarez in September – yes, another debated decision – allowed him to be promoted into the vacant spot at the top.

There are many familiar names in this year's installment of the annual Ring 100, but there have also been a lot of changes. While about 70 percent of the fighters on last year's list remained, this has been an eventful year in the sport. Several big names retired and had to be removed. And, thankfully, there've been so many big fights taking place, with the results reflected herein. Titles have changed hands. Contenders have risen and fallen.

Boxing writers David Greisman, Martin Mulcahey and Anson Wainwright – in collaboration with THE RING's editors and senior writers – once again had the monumental yet enjoyable task of debating, deliberating and then deciding on the RING 100.

It's a subjective list. Everyone has a different opinion, including each of the writers. It's nonetheless a good snapshot of who the best in the sport are right now, who the best in the sport might be in the future and many of the other titleholders, contenders, prospects and accomplished veterans deserving of attention and acclaim.

Note: Tyson Fury and Luis Ortiz were left off the list, Fury because his future remains uncertain and Ortiz because he tested positive for a banned substance in September. »

1.

GENNADY GOLOVKIN

The Rundown: Middleweight (IBF, WBA and WBC titles) ★ Record: 37-0-1 (33 KOs) ★ Last year: 3

The Reasons: Power punchers can't get to the top on power alone.

They need enough handspeed to deliver the power, the skills to help them land punches and control the ring, good enough defense and a formidable enough chin to handle whatever comes back their way.

Gennady Golovkin was built up on his knockout streak. Yet he was always more than just a set of heavy hands. That had already been on display if you knew what you were looking for. But there were still many who wanted Golovkin to prove that he was more than just a hyped-up fighter who built his reputation against lesser opponents. They wanted to see how he would fare against the best-possible opposition.

In 2017, Golovkin finally got the big fights he long desired and long deserved. Both turned out close. GGG picked up a narrow decision over top contender Daniel Jacobs in March (there were some who argued Jacobs deserved it) and then was held to a draw against RING and lineal champion Canelo Alvarez in September.

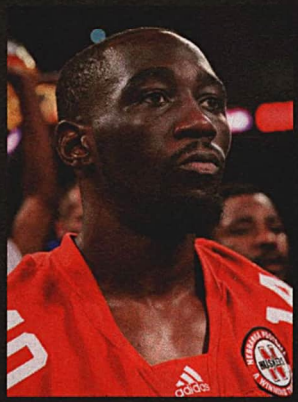
While it may be tempting to say this proves Golovkin isn't as deserving of such high ranking and esteem, what those fights actually did was elevate Jacobs and Canelo, showing that they belonged in there with the top 160-pounder of today.

Golovkin's vaunted power isn't as evident against the top echelon; that's no surprise. It's his skills that help keep him so formidable. Some believe the passage of time is beginning to take a toll on him. It's just a question of how much longer the 35-year-old will be physically able to keep up with his younger opponents.

He has had what it takes to get to the top. Now the focus turns to how long Golovkin will stay there.

The Future: The next challenge may be doing even better in a rematch with Canelo than he did in their first fight, ensuring a victory this time instead of a draw. That won't be easy, but it looks like a sequel is his team's top choice for early 2018.

Gennady Golovkin has reached the pinnacle of his sport.

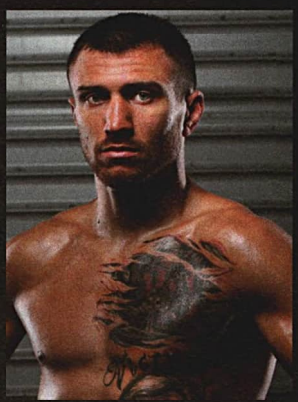


2. TERENCE CRAWFORD

The Rundown: Junior welterweight (RING, WBA, WBC and WBO titles) ★ Record: 32-0 (23 KOs) ★ Last year: 5 ▲

The Reasons: Crawford isn't just the champ at 140 – he's undisputed. Crawford cleaned out his division, which too few fighters do, beating the top guy and then showing his superiority over any new rising challengers as well. Crawford has gone 7-0 with 6 KOs in his current run at junior welterweight, beginning with a TKO of Thomas Dulorme for one world title, easily outboxing Viktor Postol (who had knocked out Lucas Matthysse) to add another belt and the RING championship, stopping Felix Diaz this past May and then scoring a body-shot KO of Julius Indongo for the remaining two titles (he has since vacated the IBF version). Crawford also had a brief run at 135 beforehand, unseating Ricky Burns for a lightweight title, stopping Yuriorkis Gamboa and then nearly shutting out Ray Beltran for the RING belt. He's gifted, brilliant, versatile and headed for even greater challenges.

The Future: Crawford will likely jump to 147, perhaps taking on Jeff Horn in 2018 before eyeing big fights with guys like Errol Spence and Keith Thurman.

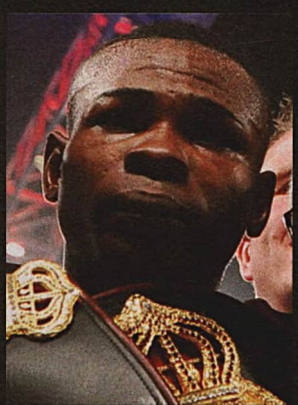


3. VASYL LOMACHENKO

The Rundown: Junior lightweight (WBO title) ★ Record: 9-1 (7 KOs) ★ Last year: 7 ▲

The Reasons: One of the greatest amateurs in history is now one of the best professional boxers. It's easy to see why, given the amazing speed and skill he uses to dominate opponents. Lomachenko hasn't been able to truly test his talents against his peers in the pros, if there are any. There have been no unification bouts with his fellow titleholders, as they haven't been eager to face him. Nor has there been a rematch with Orlando Salido, who got away with a lot while winning a close decision over Lomachenko in 2014. Lomachenko went on to outpoint Gary Russell Jr. for a vacant belt at 126 and defended it three times against lesser foes before moving up last year in hopes of better competition. He KO'd Roman Martinez for a title, gave Nicholas Walters his first loss, outclassed Jason Sosa and overwhelmed Miguel Marriaga. Walters, Sosa and Marriaga all remained on their stools rather than come out for more.

The Future: Next up is an intriguing collision with fellow two-time Olympic gold medalist Guillermo Rigondeaux on December 9.



4. GUILLERMO RIGONDEAUX

The Rundown: Junior featherweight (WBA title) ★ Record: 17-0 (11 KOs) ★ Last year: 6 ▲

The Reasons: Rigondeaux still appears to be one of the best on the rare occasions we see him. Roc Nation hasn't helped his cause too much. The promoter rarely promotes, leaving Rigondeaux waiting for opportunities to fight. He had a snoozer decision over Drian Francisco on the Miguel Cotto-Canelo Alvarez undercard at the end of 2015, traveled to the U.K. in summer 2016 to fight on someone else's show just to stay busy, made short work of Jazza Dickens and then waited nearly a year for his mandatory defense against Moises Flores to take place underneath the Andre Ward-Sergey Kovalev rematch. Rigondeaux at 36 was still clearly faster and better than Flores in their three minutes of action, but was done in by the action that took place after the bell. Rigondeaux landed late. Flores went down and seemed to oversell the shot. The KO was rightly overturned.

The Future: Rigondeaux finally landed his big fight, against Lomachenko in New York.

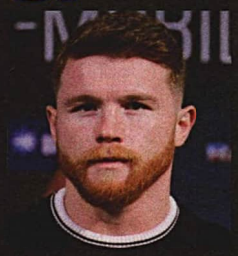
5. SERGEY KOVALEV

The Rundown: Light heavyweight ★ Record: 30-2-1 (26 KOs) ★ Last year: 2 ▼

The Reasons: Kovalev fell short twice against the now-retired Andre Ward, with both fights ending in controversy. Their first meeting was incredibly close, a debated decision that went Ward's way by a single point and triggered a wave of outrage among many fans. Kovalev lost the rematch much more clearly – he was broken down, hurt by a right hand upstairs and then stopped by a combination of body shots and, yes, a few vicious low blows that became the focus of post-fight analysis. For multiple reasons it was a painful loss, one that drops his standing to some degree, but it's important to remember who he lost to: a brilliant boxer who was No. 1 pound-for-pound when he left the sport. And Kovalev still deserves acclaim for the way he earned and defended three world titles.

The Future: Kovalev was scheduled to face Vyacheslav Shabranskyy on Nov. 25.

6.



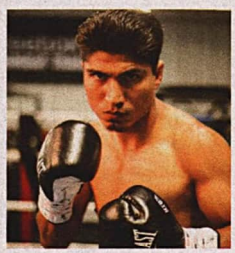
CANELO ALVAREZ

The Rundown: Middleweight (RING title) ★ Record: 49-1-2 (34 KOs) ★ Last year: 8 ▲

The Reasons: Canelo is reaching his peak. He's 27, has been a pro for a dozen years and has picked up plenty from his training in the gym and the tests he has faced in the ring. Canelo has grown into a skilled, capable counterpuncher. He was able to dodge or block many of Gennady Golovkin's punches and had the chin to handle the rest. And he used superior hand and foot speed to land counters and combinations. While he fell short, being held to a draw in a fight that many argued Golovkin deserved to win, Canelo showed he's more than a paper middleweight champion who had never before beaten an actual 160-pounder. Hopefully he'll now take fewer cash-grabs, like recent wins over Amir Khan, Liam Smith and Julio Cesar Chavez Jr., and revert to the bold fighter who was willing to step in the ring with tough challenges like Austin Trout, Floyd Mayweather Jr. (Canelo's lone defeat) and Erislandy Lara.

The Future: Hopefully a Golovkin rematch.

7.



MIKEY GARCIA

The Rundown: Lightweight (WBC title)/junior welterweight ★ Record: 37-0 (30 KOs) ★ Last year: 46 ▲

The Reasons: Garcia's career came to a halt for 2½ years. He did a good bit to make up for it in the 365 days since his return. The comeback began in July 2016 as Garcia shook off rust by stopping Elio Rojas. That led to a world title fight against undefeated Dejan Zlaticanin in January. Garcia needed just three rounds and three punches: a right uppercut and a left hook to stagger Zlaticanin, and then a right hand that knocked him out cold. The victory gave Garcia a title belt in his third weight class. Then he jumped up to 140 to take on Adrien Broner this past July. Garcia's superior skills, technique and activity led him to a unanimous decision win. The layoff, caused by a dispute with Top Rank, hasn't seemed to hurt his fighting ability.

The Future: To be determined. Garcia is eyeing the titleholders at 135 and 140, has spoken of wanting Vasyl Lomachenko and even floated the idea of moving up to 147 someday.

8.

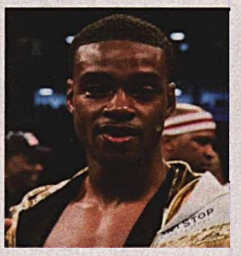
NAOYA INOUE

The Rundown: Junior bantamweight (WBO title) ★ Record: 14-0 (12 KOs) ★ Last year: 11 ▲

The Reasons: Inoue's nickname, "Monster," is fitting. He's a frighteningly good talent. Only two foes have lasted the distance. One of them, Ryoichi Taguchi, has since won a world title. The other, David Carmona, was fortunate that Inoue hurt his hand mid-fight. Everyone else was blasted away by Inoue's speed and power, a prodigious package. Inoue was 21 years old and just 5-0 when he took out Adrian Hernandez for a world title at junior flyweight and then jumped from 108 to 115 and blew away longtime titleholder Omar Narvaez in just two rounds. The 24-year-old has won six defenses since, including a sixth-round TKO of former titleholder Kohei Kono at the end of last year. With his division receiving HBO's spotlight, Inoue at last was introduced to mainstream fans in September, when he beat down Antonio Nieves on the undercard of the Wisaksil Wangek-Roman Gonzalez rematch.

The Future: Most desirable is a unification bout with Wangek. Barring that, a defense against Carlos Cuadras. Inoue is also reportedly considering moving up to 118 soon.

9.



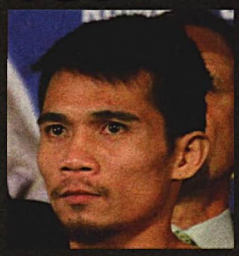
ERROL SPENCE JR.

The Rundown: Welterweight (IBF title) ★ Record: 22-0 (19 KOs) ★ Last year: 42 ▲

The Reasons: Last year we talked about how Spence had passed the eye test, looking great against lower levels of opposition (Chris Algieri, Leonard Bundu, Chris Van Heerden). In this sport, however, seeing is only believing when a fighter faces top-tier competition. In that case, Spence's nickname – "The Truth" – is wholly appropriate. Spence traveled to hostile territory to battle a very good world titleholder in Kell Brook, then broke him down. He dropped Brook twice in the later rounds, damaged his eye socket and forced him to call it a night. Spence showed the mix of attributes we look for in great fighters; his speed and power remain evident at this level, and we also learned that he has a pretty good chin. All of that meant he was both willing and able to fight through Brook. Seeing is believing, and now there are many more believers who can't wait to see Spence again.

The Future: Spence's first defense looks like it will come against Lamont Peterson in New York in January.

10.



WISAKSIL WANGEK

The Rundown: Junior bantamweight (WBC title) ★ Record: 44-4-1 (40 KOs) ★ Last year: 93 ▲

The Reasons: Ignore the padding on Wangek's record. Many Thai boxers stay very busy against lesser foes; Wangek has fought 49 times since 2009. Two of his 44 wins provide all the substance he needs. Wangek (also known as Srisaket Sor Rungvisai) fired nonstop and absorbed more than 400 shots to take a close, debated decision over Roman Gonzalez last March. He then shook things up further with a vicious – and stunning – KO in their September rematch. That doesn't make Wangek the new pound-for-pound No. 1, but it does indicate that he's one of the top names in a deeply talented division. This is his second reign. Wangek stopped Yota Sato for a world title in 2013 but lost it in a cut-shortened decision to Carlos Cuadras in 2014. (Wangek's other defeats came in his first five fights.) Wangek waited nearly three years for a title shot he deserved, then made the most of it.

The Future: Wangek's mandatory is Juan Francisco Estrada; that should be another thriller.

11.

KEITH THURMAN

The Rundown: Welterweight (WBA and WBC titles) ★ Record: 28-0 (22 KOs) ★ Last year: 17 ▲

The Reasons: The two best 147-pounders in recent years had all-time talent and skills. Keith Thurman doesn't need to measure himself up against Floyd Mayweather Jr. and Manny Pacquiao, however. He can merely continue to prove himself better than the welterweights of today, defying those who doubted him back when he was trading shots with limited sluggers like Diego Chaves and Jesus Soto Karass. Thurman's continued improvement was most evident in his past two fights, when he fended off a tough challenge from Shawn Porter for a close decision win and then boxed well against Danny Garcia this past March en route to a split-decision victory and a second world title. Thurman doesn't do any one particular thing great, but the many things he's good at have been good enough so far.

The Future: Porter wants a rematch. Errol Spence wants to take out another top dog. They will have to wait. Thurman is recovering from surgery and should return in early 2018.

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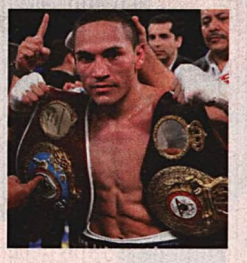


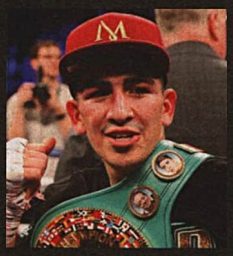
JUAN FRANCISCO ESTRADA

The Rundown: Junior bantamweight ★ Record: 36-2 (25 KOs) ★ Last year: 15 ▲

The Reasons: Estrada did little for two years, fighting just once in 2016 because of a hand injury and then starting 2017 against a lesser foe. He's back on track now with an impressive win, coming back from a deficit to edge former 115-pound titleholder Carlos Cuadras in an entertaining fight. Estrada has put together quite a run for a 27-year-old. He was battle-tested earlier in his career, losing to Juan Carlos Sanchez in 2011 (avenged soon afterward by TKO) and Roman Gonzalez in 2012. Gonzalez was a pound-for-pound king; Sanchez went on to win a belt. After the Gonzalez loss, Estrada immediately went up to 112 and picked up two titles with a split decision over Brian Viloria. He won his five defenses, including a decision over Milan Melindo (who now has a belt at 108) and KOs of former titleholders Giovani Segura and Hernan Marquez.

The Future: Estrada is now Wisaksil Wangek's mandatory challenger.

13.



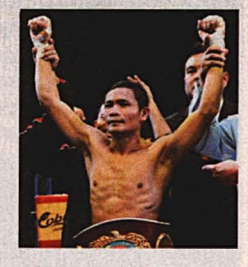
LEO SANTA CRUZ

The Rundown: Featherweight (WBA title) ★ Record: 33-1-1 (18 KOs) ★ Last year: 20 ▲

The Reasons: Santa Cruz lost his world title last year because his opponent, Carl Frampton, was smart enough to mix boxing with fighting and good enough to make it work. Santa Cruz won that belt back in their rematch this past January because he was wise enough to switch up his strategy and had the willpower to stick to it. While he still threw nearly 900 punches, he was the one controlling the distance this time, throwing Frampton off. It was Santa Cruz's most impressive win yet in a run that has seen him improve since the former 118- and 122-pound titleholder moved up to 126. He outpointed Abner Mares for a vacant world title in 2015, stayed busy with a brawl against Kiko Martinez, had the back-to-back battles with Frampton and has since been resting and waiting on his next date.

The Future: Santa Cruz was set to defend against Chris Avalos in October, an interim fight before a rematch with mandatory challenger Mares.

14.



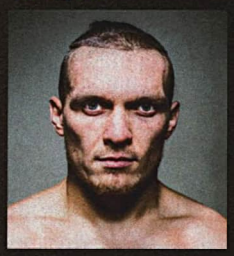
DONNIE NIETES

The Rundown: Flyweight (IBF title) ★ Record: 40-1-4 (22 KOs) ★ Last year: 14

The Reasons: Nietes arrived in the 112-pound division after five years at 108, where he was the RING champion. He wanted additional leeway at the scales and additional opportunities for big fights. Nietes was able to capture a vacant title against Komgrich Nantapech this past April in his second fight at 112. However, that belt was available for the taking because its previous owner, Johnriel Casimero, had moved up in weight. Nietes' decision over Nantapech means he's now a three-division titleholder. His reign at 105 lasted from 2007 to 2010 and included four successful defenses. His tenure at 108 went from 2011 to 2016, with a record of 8-0-1 in his defenses. It's been a decade at or near the top for Nietes. At 35, he's looking to finish with a flourish.

The Future: Nietes was set to face Juan Carlos Reveco in his first title defense on November 25.

15.



OLEKSANDR USYK

The Rundown: Cruiserweight (WBO title) ★ Record: 13-0 (11 KOs) ★ Last year: 36 ▲

The Reasons: Usyk seems to have the complete package. He has good size for a cruiserweight and is able to use his height well, boxing expertly thanks to very good hand and foot speed and a wealth of amateur experience. He won gold in 2012 as part of the same Ukrainian system that produced Vasyl Lomachenko. He throws with power. He throws in combinations. He can keep away from his opponents on defense and he can overwhelm them with offense. Usyk easily outpointed Krzysztof Glowacki in 2016, dominating a fighter who'd just dethroned titleholder Marco Huck. Since then, Usyk has knocked out Thabiso Mchunu, beat up and outpointed previously undefeated Michael Hunter and completely outclassed Huck. That all happened in a 12-month span. The next 12 months could end with him being recognized as the best 200-pounder in the world.

The Future: Usyk's win over Huck in the quarterfinals of the World Boxing Super Series tournament set him up for a unification bout with Mairis Briedis.

16.

CARL FRAMPTON

The Rundown: Featherweight ★ Record: 23-1 (14 KOs) ★ Last year: 10 ▼

The Reasons: Frampton had a very good 2016 but has since suffered a step back and then stalled out. He wrapped up his run at 122 last year in a unification bout, defeating Scott Quigg by split decision. Rather than ease into a new division, Frampton jumped up to 126 and immediately challenged Leo Santa Cruz, putting together a great performance and taking a majority decision. Then came their rematch this past January. Santa Cruz adjusted from their first fight, mixing in enough boxing to throw Frampton off and win a majority decision. Frampton was supposed to return in a July elimination bout against Andres Gutierrez, but that fight was canceled at the last minute when Gutierrez suffered several injuries when he fell in the shower after the weigh-in.

The Future: Frampton was scheduled for a homecoming bout in Belfast on November 18 against Horacio Garcia. This is his first without trainer Shane McGuigan.

17.

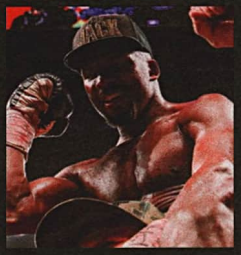
JORGE LINARES

The Rundown: Lightweight (RING and WBA titles) ★ Record: 43-3 (27 KOs) ★ Last year: 26 ▲

The Reasons: Linares was once written off after consecutive stoppage losses to Antonio DeMarco and Sergio Thompson. He's since shored up his defensive lapses, and a fighter who hardcore fans once thought would be a future star has established himself firmly as one of the top lightweights around. Linares, also a former 126- and 130-pound titleholder, has won six straight title fights at 135 over the past three years, with one long layoff due to a broken hand. His most notable opponents have been from the U.K. Linares came off the canvas and from behind on the cards to stop Kevin Mitchell in London and went to Manchester twice to take decisions over Anthony Crolla. He had a tough test against Olympic gold medalist Luke Campbell in Los Angeles this past September. Linares got an early knockdown, but Campbell boxed well afterward. Linares narrowly won the tactical fight by split decision.

The Future: Linares wants Mikey Garcia and is the mandatory challenger for Garcia's WBC title.

18.



BADOU JACK

The Rundown: Light heavyweight ★ Record: 22-1-2 (13 KOs) ★ Last year: 41 ▲

The Reasons: Until early this year, Jack was one of the two best super middleweights, which is amazing to say given how he was stopped in one round by gritty journeyman Derek Edwards as recently as 2014. But he learned from that loss, improved and continues to get even better. Barely a year after the defeat, Jack outpointed Anthony Dirrell for a world title, edged George Groves in his first defense and then was held to a controversial draw against Lucian Bute (since changed to a Jack victory after Bute tested positive for a banned substance). That landed Jack in with fellow top 168-pounder James DeGale earlier this year. Their hard-fought battle ended in a draw, which seemed about right. Jack didn't like it, but he also knew it was time for his body to move up to 175. He looked fantastic at light heavyweight in August, destroying and retiring Nathan Cleverly in just five rounds.

The Future: Jack has called out WBC titleholder Adonis Stevenson, who seems open to making the fight happen.

19.

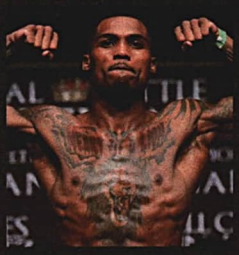
DANNY GARCIA

The Rundown: Welterweight ★ Record: 33-1 (19 KOs) ★ Last year: 16 ▼

The Reasons: When Garcia lost a split, but clear decision to Keith Thurman this past March, it wasn't a total surprise. He had been tested too rarely and, while good at what he did, he hadn't showed much ability to adjust to adversity. Perhaps it was because of how he'd remained undefeated. While there were significant wins at junior welterweight, particularly his decision victory over division boogeyman Lucas Matthysse in 2013 and a TKO of Amir Khan to become unified champ the year before, there also was his surprisingly close victory over Mauricio Herrera in 2014 and then two catchweight fights – an unnecessary drubbing of undersized Rod Salka and a fortunate win on the scorecards over Lamont Peterson that was more a product of Peterson giving away rounds than Garcia winning them. Soon after moving to welterweight, Garcia was gifted a vacant title fight with Robert Guerrero, winning it and then moving on to a non-title bout with unheralded Samuel Vargas before facing Thurman.

The Future: Garcia was in negotiations to face Brandon Rios in December.

20.



JERMALL CHARLO

The Rundown: Middleweight ★ Record: 26-0 (20 KOs) ★ Last year: 39 ▲

The Reasons: It wasn't Charlo's title win and first defense that were overly impressive, as good as those results were in dispatching ancient Cornelius Bundrage in three rounds for the belt and then overpowering overmatched Wilky Campfort in four. Rather, we got a better idea of Charlo's talent in the way he fended off a stiff challenge from Austin Trout last year and then wrapped up 2016 with a highlight-reel knockout of Julian Williams, a contender who was highly touted and undefeated – until he met Charlo. That marked the end of Charlo's time at 154. He debuted at 160 in July, making short work of Jorge Heiland, who was already thought of as limited before he came into the ring with an injured leg. That amplified Charlo's accuracy and power. We'll need to see how he looks against better middleweights.

The Future: Nothing was set. The victory over Heiland made Charlo the mandatory challenger to Gennady Golovkin's WBC title. He'll have an interim fight or two until then.

Anthony Joshua (left) staked his claim as the best heavyweight in the world by knocking out Wladimir Klitschko.

21.

ANTHONY JOSHUA

The Rundown: Division: Heavyweight (IBF and WBA titles) ★ Record: 19-0 (19 KOs) ★ Last year: 72 ▲

The Reasons: One fight with Wladimir Klitschko did more for Joshua's career than his previous 18 combined. Joshua's world title victory over Charles Martin and two defenses afterward meant little because of the opposition, but Klitschko was a former longtime champion who still had enough left to put forth a brave stand. On that one night in front of 90,000 people in London, Joshua earned hard-fought respect and furthered his case for potentially being the superstar his division has needed. He dropped Klitschko in the fifth, gassed and was put down himself in the sixth, but rose from that heavy right hand and rallied back to score a sensational 11th-round TKO. There's still reason for doubt. He faced more adversity than Tyson Fury had against Klitschko, though it can also be argued that he faced a better version of Klitschko than Fury did.

The Future: A rematch was scuttled when Klitschko retired. Joshua instead was scheduled to face Carlos Takam (a substitute for injured mandatory challenger Kubrat Pulev) on October 28.

22.

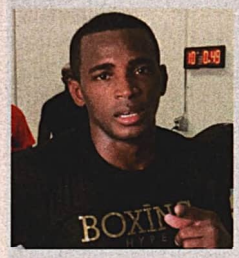
KAZUTO IOKA

The Rundown: Division: Flyweight (WBA title) ★ Record: 22-1 (13 KOs) ★ Last year: 22

The Reasons: Ioka sits atop a division that looks very different from when Roman Gonzalez and Juan Francisco Estrada reigned. Don't let that fool you. Ioka is very good, a three-division titleholder with one loss and several quality wins. That defeat came in Ioka's flyweight debut in 2014, when he took on the difficult Amnat Ruenroeng and dropped a split decision. A year later, Ioka edged top contender Juan Carlos Reveco, who hadn't lost in eight years. Ioka ended 2015 with an emphatic rematch win, stopping Reveco in 11. Since then, he's beaten prospects Keyvin Lara, Yutthana Kaensa and Noknoi Sitthiprasert. Ioka is 28 years old and likely hitting his prime after a prodigious start; he was 6-0 when he won a belt at 105, unified titles with a win over Akira Yaegashi three fights later and then subsequently earned a title at 108, which he successfully defended three times.

The Future: There was no date for Ioka's mandatory against prospect Artem Dalakian. Hopefully fights against top flyweights come soon after.

23.



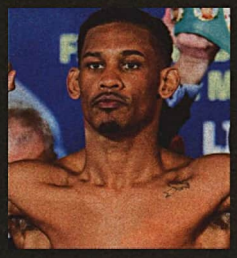
ERISLANDY LARA

The Rundown: Division: Junior middleweight (WBA title) ★ Record: 24-2-2 (14 KOs) ★ Last year: 19 ▼

The Reasons: Lara is a constant in the transitioning 154-pound division. Alas, he still doesn't get the respect he could've had by now. Some of that is his fault. Despite a very good 2013, with an entertaining TKO of Alfredo Angulo and a clear decision over Austin Trout, Lara has a habit of doing enough to win but not enough to win over fans. That has hurt his marketability. As a result, he hasn't landed the opponents and showcases that are commensurate with his obvious skill level. Lara, a former amateur star from Cuba, has tremendous ability and has flashed power at times. That matters little when your past five opponents are Ishe Smith, Delvin Rodriguez, Jan Zaveck, Vanes Martirosyan and Yuri Foreman. Lara is 34. Time might be running out for him.

The Future: Lara was set to defend against unbeaten prospect Terrell Gausha on October 14.

24.



DANIEL JACOBS

The Rundown: Division: Middleweight ★ Record: 32-2 (29 KOs) ★ Last year: 29 ▲

The Reasons: Jacobs didn't get the win over Gennady Golovkin in March but did get plenty of respect. Some viewers believed he won. He exhibited enough speed and power to make Golovkin more cautious than usual, got up from a knockdown and boxed well enough to push GGG to the limit, which no one had done to that point. This was the moment Jacobs needed. He had been shockingly stopped by Dmitry Pirog while a young contender in 2010. He had been sidelined by cancer before making a miraculous comeback. He had scored a stunning first-round TKO of Peter Quillin at the end of 2015. And then he and his team did too little to capitalize on that momentum. While Jacobs isn't undefeated anymore, he has unfinished business with Golovkin and a solid claim to contention in the division.

The Future: Jacobs, who recently signed with Matchroom Boxing, was set to face Luis Arias on November 11.

25.

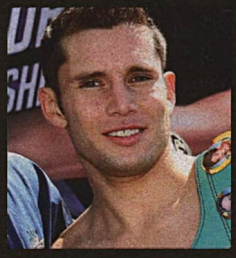
GARY RUSSELL JR.

The Rundown: Division: Featherweight (WBC title) ★ Record: 28-1 (17 KOs) ★ Last year: 30 ▲

The Reasons: It takes just one glimpse of Gary Russell Jr. to see why he's high on this list, given the lightning speed at which he throws punches and the way those shots can devastate his opponents. Alas, we only rarely get glimpses of Russell; he has fought just twice in the 2½ years since he won his featherweight title with a fourth-round destruction of Jhonny Gonzalez. There has been a run of bad luck, including a cut in camp that resulted in a defense against mandatory challenger Oscar Escandon being pushed back. He didn't return until April 2016, making expectedly easy work of Patrick Hyland. A potential unification bout with Lee Selby didn't come to fruition. Then Escandon got hurt, postponing their fight again. They finally met in May, with Russell taking Escandon out in seven. The tools are there. The big wins aren't there just yet.

The Future: Russell says the right things, at least: He wants his fellow titleholders at 126 or will move up in weight. There's been no announcement on either front. Joseph Diaz is his mandatory.

26.



CARLOS CUADRAS

The Rundown: Division: Junior bantamweight ★ Record: 36-2-1 (27 KOs) ★ Last year: 28 ▲

The Reasons: Cuadras' only two losses came against one great fighter and one very good one. The great fighter, Roman Gonzalez, was visibly marked up at the end of their competitive 12-round contest. The other, Juan Francisco Estrada, edged Cuadras by a mere one point. Both had to dig deep to beat him. Cuadras also owns a victory over the man who beat Gonzalez twice. That technical decision against Wisaksil Wangek in 2014 earned Cuadras a world title; he was ahead on the scorecards when a clash of heads opened a fight-ending cut. Cuadras might seem to lack technique at times, but he's shown some boxing ability even while preferring to let go with a volume of wider punches. It has clearly worked pretty well for him so far.

The Future: Even in defeat, Cuadras should remain in contention in a red-hot division that's drawing more and more interest. It's still too early to know his next opponent, though.

27.

ADONIS **STEVENSON**

The Rundown:
Division: Light heavyweight (WBC title) ★ Record: 29-1 (24 KOs) ★ Last year: 24 ▼

The Reasons:
Stevenson's championship reign as the lineal king was frustrating enough back when he ducked Sergey Kovalev. It has gotten worse, as opportunities for good fights have come and gone with regularity. His career in recent years has been marked by strung-out paydays with a ridiculously minimal amount of risk. Things got so bad that Thomas Williams Jr. felt like a step up last year. At least Williams made Stevenson dig deep to put him away in a fun four-round brawl. Beyond that, his recent outings featured uninspiring choices: Dmitry Sukhotsky, Sakio Bika, Tommy Karpency and a version of Andrzej Fonfara that wasn't thought to have much left and indeed didn't. The talent's clearly still there; Stevenson at 39 is still putting lesser opponents away the way he should. He's just not defending against the kind of fighters that a person in his position should face.

The Future:
Stevenson's next fight will likely be against long-waiting mandatory Eleider Alvarez in early 2018. Newly arrived contender Badou Jack also looms.

28.

MANNY **PACQUIAO**

The Rundown:
Division: Welterweight ★ Record: 59-7-2 (38 KOs) ★ Last year: 12 ▼

The Reasons:
In 2016, Pacquiao had a better year than any other top welterweight. In 2017, he lost to Jeff Horn, who never would be confused with a top welterweight. Although many thought Pacquiao clearly deserved to win, he didn't show anywhere near the form of eight months earlier. We still include him on this list, and somewhat high, out of benefit of the doubt — deference we don't necessarily give others. Perhaps he had an off night rather than getting old overnight. Perhaps he took Horn lightly and didn't train the way he should've. Had the judges ruled in his favor, he probably still would've been ranked somewhere around this spot.

The Future:
Pacquiao pulled out of a proposed November rematch with Horn and nothing is scheduled.

29.

JAMES **DEGALE**

The Rundown:
Division: Super middleweight (IBF title) ★ Record: 23-1-1 (14 KOs) ★ Last year: 25 ▼

The Reasons:
DeGale is at last left standing as No. 1 at 168. That can be attributed in part to the process of elimination. Carl Froch retired before DeGale could get a shot at him. Andre Ward departed for light heavyweight. DeGale and Badou Jack earned the top two spots among those remaining, with DeGale outpointing Andre Dirrell for a vacant world title, defeating a resurgent Lucian Bute by decision and then fending off gritty Rogelio Medina, and Jack embarking on a similar journey. They met in a unification bout this past January. Jack was down in the first, DeGale was down in the 12th, and there was plenty of back-and-forth action in-between. It was competitive but not conclusive – the rare draw that feels acceptable. Jack has since moved up to 175, leaving DeGale atop the division.

The Future:
DeGale needed surgery to his septum and shoulder; he also suffered a perforated eardrum and lost a tooth in the fight. He could return this December, though nothing was official.

30.

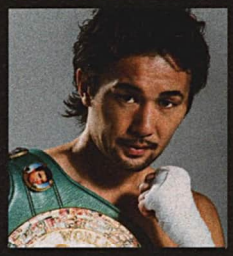
ROMAN **GONZALEZ**

The Rundown:
Division: Junior bantamweight ★ Record: 46-2 (38 KOs) ★ Last year: 1 ▼

The Reasons:
What a precipitous fall for the once and former pound-for-pound king. That's what happens when you take on the kind of tough challenges that the greatest fighters should. Gonzalez kept moving up after reigns at 105 (where he beat Yutaka Niida and Katsunari Takayama, among others), 108 (punctuated with a decision over Juan Francisco Estrada), and 112 (where he was RING and lineal champ, stopping Akira Yaegashi and besting Brian Viloria and McWilliams Arroyo). Gonzalez's first fight at 115 was against one of the two top titleholders, Carlos Cuadras. Though Cuadras marked up Gonzalez's face, "Chocolatito" remained an offensive dynamo, capturing a title in his fourth weight class. Bigger foes could handle his power better, however, and dish it out stronger. Punishment also adds up. Gonzalez lost to Wisaksil Wangek in March in a highly competitive fight. Many felt Gonzalez deserved the win, but Wangek made that debate moot in their rematch, knocking Gonzalez unconscious in four.

The Future:
Gonzalez might consider moving back down to flyweight if he wants to continue fighting.

31.



SHINSUKE **YAMANAKA**

The Rundown:
Division: Bantamweight (RING title) ★ Record: 27-1-2 (19 KOs) ★ Last year: 9 ▼

The Reasons: It's not easy to rank Yamanaka decisively. His only loss might be overturned after Luis Nery tested positive for a performance-enhancing drug, although that case wasn't resolved as of press time. Yet Yamanaka's loss still happened; he was still stopped in four rounds. He still took the punishment. And he has still looked more vulnerable of late even as he had remained undefeated, put together a nearly six-year title reign, made 12 successful title defenses and beat former titleholders from lighter divisions, such as Vic Darchinyan, Tomas Rojas, Suriyan Kaikanha and Malcolm Tunacao. He seemed to be slipping in 2015, fortunate to take a decision over former 118-pound beltholder Anselmo Moreno. Yamanaka outpointed Liborio Solis afterward (hitting the canvas in the process) and then won the rematch with Moreno, getting up from a knockdown to stop him in a seven-round war. Yamanaka's power and skills remain; his speed is fading, however, leaving his chin more vulnerable.

The Future:
Yamanaka was reinstated as RING champion and could get his WBC title back as well. Barring a Nery rematch, though, the 35-year-old may opt to retire.

32.

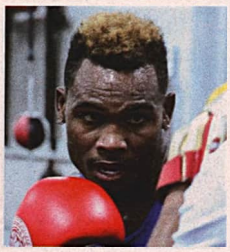
DEMETRIUS ANDRADE

The Rundown: Division: Junior middleweight / middleweight ★ Record: 24-0 (16 KOs) ★ Last year: 37 ▲

The Reasons: Andrade remains the odd man out despite being so visibly talented. He showed he belonged after edging Vanes Martirosyan for a vacant title. Then, after dominating Brian Rose in a mismatch, Andrade disappeared for 16 months. He reasserted his standing in his second fight back, scoring an impressive late stoppage of Willie Nelson last year. Alas, he's resorted to using his mouth to make a case for fights, as nothing else is working. Andrade even went to Germany for an interim belt, hoping it'd get him more leverage and perhaps a shot at Erislandy Lara. But Lara and others are facing fellow fighters under Al Haymon's banner. If you feel bad for Andrade, know that he did a lot of this to himself, running out on a fight with Jermell Charlo in 2014, getting into a promotional spat and then resigning with them. Even a victory over Jack Culcay in March didn't measure up to how he performed against Nelson.

The Future: Andrade will face Alantez Fox on Oct. 21 at middleweight.

33.



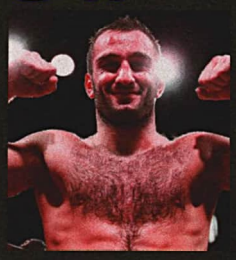
JERMELL CHARLO

The Rundown: Division: Junior middleweight (WBC title) ★ Record: 29-0 (14 KOs) ★ Last year: 62 ▲

The Reasons: Charlo hasn't blown fans away the way twin brother Jermall did last year against Julian Williams. He hasn't really had a chance. He hasn't faced top opposition, but he's done exactly what someone with his perceived talent should do against those not on his level. He dominated Gabriel Rosado in early 2014, back when that still meant something, and seemed set for a title shot later that year against Demetrius Andrade. Except Andrade pulled out. Charlo had to wait for another opportunity. He outpointed Vanes Martirosyan in 2015 and got a shot at one of Floyd Mayweather's vacant belts in 2015. Charlo had to come from behind to win it, though. He was being outboxed by John Jackson before scoring an eighth-round KO. Charlo's first defense went much better; he stopped Charles Hatley – a mandatory whose claim to fame was beating Anthony Mundine – in six this past April.

The Future: Jermell's toughest challenge (and perhaps his biggest moment) is next: a fight with top prospect Erickson Lubin on Oct. 14.

34.



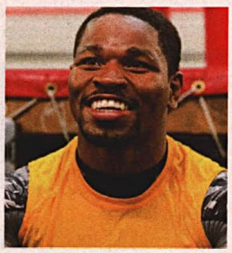
MURAT GASSIEV

The Rundown: Division: Cruiserweight (IBF title) ★ Record: 24-0 (17 KOs) ★ Last year: unranked ▲

The Reasons: The 24-year-old Gassiev has climbed quickly toward the top of the 200-pound division. Having Abel Sanchez in his corner has probably helped a lot. Gassiev retired Felix Cora in 2015 and then moved on to tests against fellow prospects. A fight with Isiah Thomas was ruled no contest because Gassiev nailed him after the bell. A bout with Jordan Shimmell ended before the first round did, Shimmell's lights turned out by a huge left hook. Gassiev then went to Moscow to face a fellow Russian in Denis Lebedev at the end of 2016. Their bout was competitive; arguments could be made for either as the winner. Gassiev left with the split decision and one of Lebedev's two titles; bizarrely, the other wasn't on the line due to some maneuvering on Lebedev's part.

The Future: Gassiev is one of eight cruiserweights competing in the World Boxing Super Series. He was scheduled to face former titleholder Krzysztof Wlodarczyk in a quarterfinal bout on Oct. 21.

35.



SHAWN PORTER

The Rundown: Division: Welterweight ★ Record: 27-2-1 (17 KOs) ★ Last year: 27 ▼

The Reasons: On the one hand, Porter came up short twice. On the other, those losses were to top welterweights and one – against Keith Thurman last year – was narrow on the scorecards. There isn't much nuance to Porter's game; he's a pressure fighter and a mauler. He overwhelmed Devon Alexander for a title in 2013 and destroyed Paulie Malignaggi in 2014 before losing a clear majority decision to Kell Brook. Some felt the scoring in favor of Brook was a little too wide. Porter was also willing to drain to 144 for a fight with Adrien Broner in 2015, winning a decision. Porter still belongs and is awaiting his next shot. In the interim, he bounced back from the Thurman defeat with a TKO of Andre Berto in April.

The Future: A death in the family led Porter to pull out of facing Thomas Dulorme in August. Porter is not seeking to reschedule that fight, though. Instead, he will face Adrian Granados in the co-feature to Deontay Wilder-Bermane Stiverne on November 4.

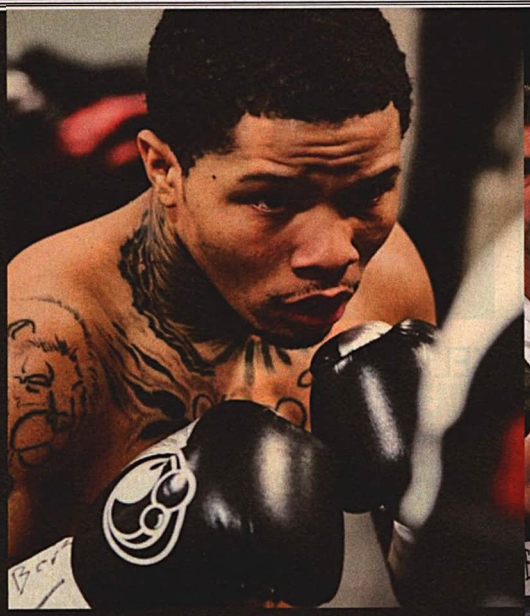
36.

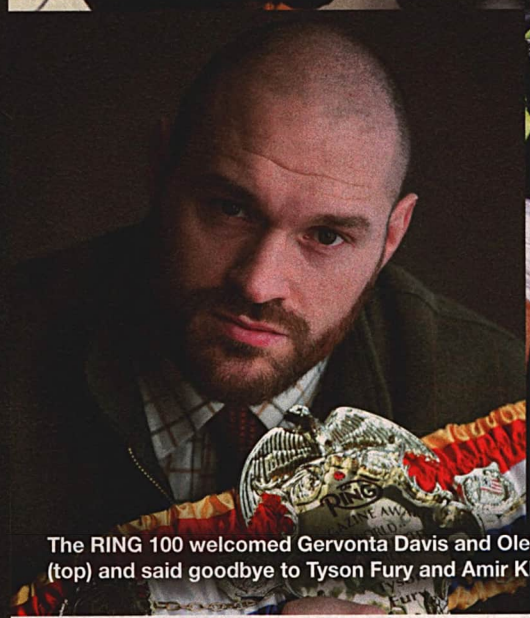
KOSEI TANAKA

The Rundown: Division: Junior flyweight (WBO title) ★ Record: 10-0 (6 KOs) ★ Last year: 100 ▲

The Reasons: Tanaka has done a lot in a short amount of time. While he hasn't accomplished as much in 10 fights as Vasyl Lomachenko, that's not a fair comparison. Half of Tanaka's fights had a world title on the line. After taking out previously unbeaten Ryuji Hara, Tanaka fought for a vacant belt at 105 pounds, outpointing contender Julian Yedras in 2015. Tanaka knocked out Vic Saludar to wrap up the year and then left the division behind. He injured his hand in his next fight, a knockout victory over Rene Patilano, which sidelined him for a bit. 2016 ended with another world title, this one captured in a fifth-round TKO of Moises Fuentes, a former 105-pound titleholder who had since been a strong contender at 108. Tanaka's class has been evident in his two defenses, a May decision over mandatory Angel Acosta and a ninth-round TKO over Rangsan Chayanram in September.

The Future: Tanaka suffered a pair of fractured eye sockets against Chayanram and will need time to recover.





The RING 100 welcomed Gervonta Davis and Oleksandr Gvozdyk (top) and said goodbye to Tyson Fury and Amir Khan (bottom).

IN AND OUT

Fighters who entered the RING 100 this year and those ranked last year who departed.

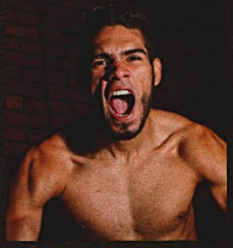
IN (This year's ranking)

34. Murat Gassiev
38. Miguel Berchelt
40. Mairis Briedis
42. Gervonta Davis
44. Jessie Magdaleno
50. Khalid Yafai
61. Daigo Higa
62. Oleksandr Gvozdyk
68. George Groves
70. Jarrett Hurd
72. Julius Indongo
73. Milan Melindo
77. Callum Smith
79. Rey Vargas
80. Regis Prograis
81. Jerwin Ancajas
84. Chris Eubank Jr.
85. David Benavidez
86. Liborio Solis
87. Ken Shiro
88. Yunier Dorticos
89. Hiroto Kyoguchi
90. Erickson Lubin
91. Zhanat Zhakiyanov
93. Dmitry Bivol
96. Josh Taylor
97. Diego De La Hoya
98. Jeff Horn
99. Ryan Burnett

OUT (2016 ranking)

4. Andre Ward
18. Timothy Bradley
31. Tyson Fury
34. Anselmo Moreno
38. Wladimir Klitschko
48. Marco Huck
51. Francisco Vargas
54. Dejan Zlaticanin
59. Takashi Uchiyama
60. Lamont Peterson
63. Takashi Miura
64. Amir Khan
65. Luis Ortiz
66. Jesus Cuellar
67. Johnriel Casimero
74. Eduard Troyanovsky
78. Brian Viloria
79. Julian Williams
82. Jose Pedraza
84. Byron Rojas
87. Luis Concepcion
89. Pedro Guevara
90. Ganigan Lopez
91. Akira Yaegashi
94. Joseph Parker
95. Katsunari Takayama
96. Jonathan Guzman
97. Hozumi Hasegawa
98. Anthony Crolla

37.



GILBERTO RAMIREZ

The Rundown: Division: Super middleweight (WBO title) ★ Record: 36-0 (24 KOs) ★ Last year: 44 ▲

The Reasons: Ramirez had already proved he could outbox and outwork tough but limited veterans (Derek Edwards) and second-tier prospects (Maksim Vlasov and Gevorg Khatchikian). He then took on aging titleholder Arthur Abraham and shut him out for a belt in 2016, sat out a year with an injury and returned in 2017 to do the same to Max Bursak. September brought a good test against a real physical challenge. Mandatory contender Jesse Hart had height, handspeed and enough foot movement to make Ramirez miss early. Ramirez adjusted, dropped Hart, brought the battle into the trenches, landed combinations to the head and body and still had to fend off a spirited comeback attempt and plenty of flush shots. Ramirez doesn't have big power and is hittable on the inside, but he held up well and was able to take a competitive decision against a prospect who elevated himself that night into a contender.

The Future: It was too early to determine who Ramirez might fight next.

38.

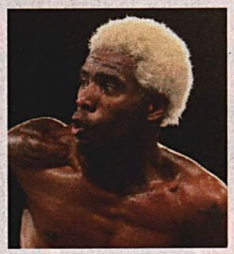
MIGUEL BERCHELT

The Rundown: Division: Junior lightweight (WBC title) ★ Record: 32-1 (28 KOs) ★ Last year: unranked ▲

The Reasons: Sometimes a quick loss is a fighter's undoing. Sometimes, however, a talented fighter makes a mistake, gets caught and learns a valuable lesson the hard way. Back in 2014, Berchelt got caught by a counter left hook from Luis Eduardo Florez halfway through the first round, went down and got up on legs shaky enough that the referee stopped the bout. Berchelt rebuilt, scoring nine straight wins by KO or TKO. That led to a fight with Francisco Vargas that had hardcore fans salivating. It didn't disappoint. Berchelt broke down Vargas and stopped him in the 11th round. Berchelt also fought tough Takashi Miura this past July. He recorded a quality decision win, choosing to box more and pick his spots due to Miura's constant pressure.

The Future: Berchelt injured his hand against Miura but has recovered. He is in discussions to face Orlando Salido in December for what could be a hellacious firefight.

39.



JEZREEL CORRALES

The Rundown: Division: Junior lightweight (WBA title) ★ Record: 22-1 (8 KOs) ★ Last year: 56 ▲

The Reasons: Corrales proved his first win over Takashi Uchiyama wasn't a fluke by topping the longtime 130-pound titleholder by split decision in a rematch at the end of 2016. Now he needs to prove that those two victories were the result of his ability and not the decline of Uchiyama, who has since retired. The first step came in Corrales' second defense, against Robinson Castellanos in July. That bout brought a mixed verdict. Corrales had to come off the canvas twice in the fourth round. He then dropped Castellanos once in the seventh. Corrales built a narrow lead on the cards and just barely scraped by with a majority technical decision. Castellanos was coming off a TKO of Yuriorkis Gamboa, but he's never going to be confused with Vasyl Lomachenko.

The Future: Corrales was expected to face contender Alberto Machado on Oct. 21 on HBO. Unification fights or a necessary Castellanos rematch will have to wait.

40.

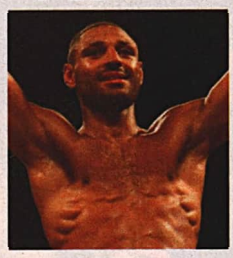
MAIRIS BRIEDIS

The Rundown: Division: Cruiserweight (WBC title) ★ Record: 23-0 (18 KOs) ★ Last year: unranked ▲

The Reasons: Briedis occasionally competed as a small heavyweight early in his career. Many initially learned of him because of his highlight-reel KO of Manuel Charr in 2015. But he's back at 200 and seems to be comfortable there. In 2016 he took on Olanrewaju Durodola, who at the time was fresh off a big TKO of Dmitry Kudryashov. Briedis stopped Durodola in nine, gave untested prospect Simon Vallily his first defeat and then got an opportunity to fight for a belt left vacant by Tony Bellew. Briedis outpointed Marco Huck in that fight this past April, going 12 rounds for the first time. He then won an ugly decision over Mike Perez in the first round of the World Boxing Super Series.He doesn't yet have the pedigree of the other cruiserweight titleholders, but he's off to a decent start with the chance to do more soon.

The Future: Briedis will need to perform better next, as Oleksandr Usyk awaits him in the semifinals.

41.



KELL BROOK

The Rundown: Division: Welterweight ★ Record: 36-2 (25 KOs) ★ Last year: 13 ▼

The Reasons: It's hard to know exactly where to rank Brook. He's lost two in a row by TKO, both against top names. Too many fighters balance risk and reward to pad their bank accounts and prolong their time at the top. Brook, who had been pining for a major payday, took huge risks for huge rewards. He stepped up two weight classes to face Gennady Golovkin when the GGG-Chris Eubank Jr. bout fell apart. Brook was game but couldn't handle the power; he was done in five with a broken eye socket. Brook was back eight months later against a welterweight seen as the future of the division, Errol Spence Jr. They battled competitively until Spence took over and broke Brook down, damaging his other eye socket and forcing him to call it a night in the 11th. That ended a title reign that started off promising with a victory over Shawn Porter but included three wins over underwhelming opposition.

The Future: Brook somehow wants to fight again in 2017. He'll likely be at junior middleweight when he returns.

42.

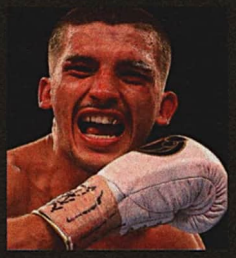
GERVONTA DAVIS

The Rundown: Division: Junior lightweight/ lightweight ★ Record: 19-0 (18 KOs) ★ Last year: unranked ▲

The Reasons: Floyd Mayweather's latest protege is trying to keep from being too much like the previous one. Like Adrien Broner, Gervonta Davis has demonstrated considerable speed and power while capturing a world title at junior lightweight at a young age. Davis was 22 when he unseated undefeated Jose Pedraza with a seventh-round stoppage. Then he traveled to the U.K. to clobber Liam Walsh in three, giving Walsh his first blemish. But with the spotlight at its brightest, Davis didn't exactly shine. Like Broner, he lost a title on the scale. Davis came in overweight for a bout with Francisco Fonseca in the co-feature slot to Mayweather-McGregor. (He'd also struggled to make 130 for the Walsh fight.) A drained Davis didn't look sharp against Fonseca, even though he landed several clean, flashy shots. Fonseca was put away only when a rabbit punch dropped him for the count in the eighth.

The Future: It shouldn't be a surprise if Davis recognizes reality and moves up to 135 for his next fight.

43.



LEE **SELBY**

The Rundown: Division: Featherweight (IBF title) ★ Record: 25-1 (9 KOs) ★ Last year: 35 ▼

The Reasons: Selby is a crafty and capable boxer, skills necessary to compete at a higher level when your knockout ratio is as low as his. Selby's lone loss was in his fifth pro fight. Since then, he beat future 130-pound contender Stephen Smith when both were still prospects, took on a number of other prospects, stopped previously unbeaten Joel Brunker and then won a world title against Evgeny Gradovich in 2015. Despite talk last year of a potential unification bout with Gary Russell Jr., Selby's three defenses and one non-title bout have been against less notable opposition, including Fernando Montiel, Eric Hunter (who dropped Selby early) and mandatory contender Jonathan Victor Barros (who was dropped late). Selby outboxed them all. He has cut his teeth against a certain level of opponent. It's time for a test against the best of 126.

The Future: One good test is being discussed: former titleholder Carl Frampton.

44.

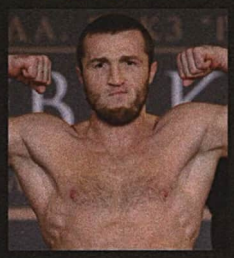
JESSIE **MAGDALENO**

The Rundown: Division: Junior featherweight (WBO title) ★ Record: 25-0 (18 KOs) ★ Last year: unranked ▲

The Reasons: Magdaleno's victory last year over Nonito Donaire meant much more for his career than all of his previous fights combined. For one, it earned him a world title. But beyond that, Magdaleno had been pro for six years and the biggest names on his record to date were those who'd lost to recognizable names in the past. Magdaleno developed his skills as his body matured and took a significant step up just in time. While Donaire was no longer the fighter he'd once been, he still had plenty left to give Magdaleno a competitive fight. Magdaleno belonged in there with Donaire, took an early lead and was able to hold on for a decision that seemed closer than the scorecards indicated. His first defense came this past April, a much easier two-round victory over Adeilson Dos Santos.

The Future: Magdaleno pulled out of a November defense against Cesar Juarez due to a hand injury. It was too soon to know when he'd return.

45.



DENIS **LEBEDEV**

The Rundown: Division: Cruiserweight (WBA title) ★ Record: 30-2 (22 KOs) ★ Last year: 23 ▼

The Reasons: Lebedev's good run has come to an end. There's no need to push the 38-year-old out the door just yet, though. His split-decision loss to Murat Gassiev last year was his first setback since he was outpointed by Marco Huck in 2010. He was stopped in a brutal battle with Guillermo Jones in 2013 but the result was overturned because Jones tested positive for a banned substance. In the four fights that followed, Lebedev knocked out unbeaten prospect Pawel Kolodziej in two, outpointed contender Youri Kalenga, took out Lateef Kayode in eight and then unified titles with a five-minute victory over Victor Emilio Ramirez. Bizarrely, Lebedev's title reign continues; his team convinced the WBA not to have its belt on the line when he fought Gassiev. And so his latest defense came in July, a one-sided decision over underwhelming Mark Flanagan.

The Future: Slimmer pickings are available for now. Lebedev declined to enter the World Boxing Super Series and cannot test himself against and potentially build his legacy with all of the other top 200-pounders.

46.

ABNER **MARES**

The Rundown: Division: Featherweight ★ Record: 30-2-1 (15 KOs) ★ Last year: 61 ▲

The Reasons: Mares can't be written out at 126 just yet. He picked up a much-needed win last year, beating Jesus Cuellar to earn a mandatory rematch with Leo Santa Cruz, against whom Mares lost a competitive but clear decision in 2015. While the former three-division titleholder didn't look bad in defeat, it did suggest that the division could be passing him by. After all, he'd suffered a shocking first-round knockout against Jhonny Gonzalez in 2013 and rebuilt himself with three wins over lower-tier opposition, only to fall short against Santa Cruz. Don't count out Mares in the rematch; as we saw with the Santa Cruz-Carl Frampton series, the result of one fight doesn't necessarily dictate what happens in the second. And Mares did look good against Cuellar.

The Future: Mares was due to return from a 10-month layoff to face Andres Gutierrez in October in what was supposed to set up the rematch with Santa Cruz.

47.

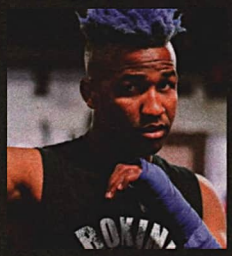
DEONTAY **WILDER**

The Rundown: Division: Heavyweight (WBC title) ★ Record: 38-0 (37 KOs) ★ Last year: 43 ▼

The Reasons: Wilder has knocked out all but one of his opponents. That one was the man he beat to win a heavyweight title, Bermane Stiverne. He has speed. He clearly has power. Why, then, are there still reasons to doubt him? For one, the choice of foes since Wilder outboxed and dethroned Stiverne in early 2015: Eric Molina, Johann Duhaupas, Artur Szpilka, Chris Arreola and Gerald Washington. This isn't all Wilder's fault; Arreola stepped in after Alexander Povetkin tested positive for a banned substance. Then Wilder suffered injuries against Arreola and took a tune-up upon his return. Still, Wilder has looked less effective against a few fighters, such as Szpilka and Washington, who shouldn't trouble a top heavyweight. The ring generalship disappears. So does technique when he gets a fighter hurt. His power keeps him a force to be reckoned with. He'll need that – and possibly more – once he finally gets in the ring with top-tier heavyweights.

The Future: Luis Ortiz tested positive for a banned substance, so Wilder will have a rematch with Stiverne on November 4.

48.



RANCES BARTHELEMY

The Rundown: Division: Junior welterweight ★ Record: 26-0 (13 KOs) ★ Last year: 21 ▼

The Reasons: Barthelemy's 5-foot-11 frame needed more bulk on it than the 130- and 135-pound divisions allowed. That limited his title reigns there to less than a year each. But if he's better off at junior welterweight, then he'll need to show more than he did in May. Barthelemy took a unanimous decision over Kiryl Relikh, but many felt the fight was much closer than the scorecards indicated. Relikh outworked Barthelemy, who has shown good skill and power before but had a tenacious foe this time out. Barthelemy handled a tough battle against Denis Shafikov pretty well in 2015, taking a clear decision and a vacant world title, and then defended his new belt with a victory over Mickey Bey. Barthelemy said his layoff – nearly a year – had an effect on him. He'll need to be more impressive the next time out.

The Future: The WBA has ordered a Relikh rematch. Nothing was set, though, so we'll see if Barthelemy heads in another direction instead.

49.

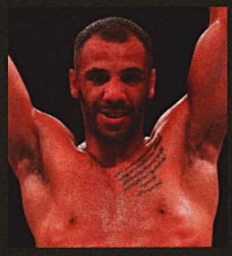
TERRY FLANAGAN

The Rundown: Division: Lightweight (WBO title) ★ Record: 33-0 (13 KOs) ★ Last year: 52 ▲

The Reasons: Flanagan is back to facing a better quality of opposition than had become habit in 2016, when he outpointed fringe contender Derry Mathews, shut out 42-year-old Mzonke Fana and stopped undersized Orlando Cruz. This year, Flanagan's first fight came against Petr Petrov, whose only recent losses had been to Dejan Zlaticanin and Marcos Maidana. The Petrov bout was rougher and closer than the scorecards indicated. Still, it was probably the biggest name of Flanagan's five title defenses other than the first one, a second-round TKO of Diego Magdaleno in 2015. Flanagan fancies himself a top lightweight but needs better tests of his boxing ability.

The Future: Flanagan suffered a leg injury, postponing a fight with vaunted prospect Felix Verdejo. The WBO also says Verdejo is no longer his mandatory; contender Ray Beltran is.

50.



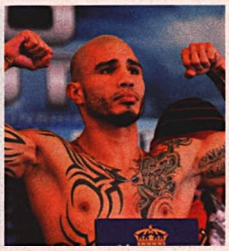
KHALID YAFAI

The Rundown: Division: Junior bantamweight (WBA title) ★ Record: 22-0 (14 KOs) ★ Last year: unranked ▲

The Reasons: So much attention went toward five of the 115-pounders who shared one September card. Yafai wasn't on the show but is deserving of attention as well. He has good handspeed, throws in combinations and seems defensively comfortable even as he has stepped up his level of competition in recent outings. That's no surprise; he had a good amateur career, losing in the 2008 Olympics to the eventual silver medalist and then turning pro after failing to make the U.K. team in 2012. Yafai won a world title last December, dominating Luis Concepcion for the decision. He triumphed in his first defense by a similar margin, though May's victory over Suguru Muranaka also saw Yafai injure both hands in the process.

The Future: Before Yafai can aim for the names in his division, he has a mandatory defense scheduled for October 28 against undefeated Sho Ishida.

51.



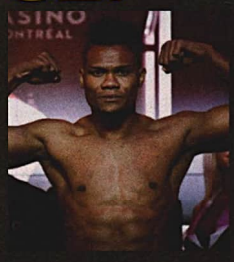
MIGUEL COTTO

The Rundown: Division: Junior middleweight (WBO title) ★ Record: 41-5 (33 KOs) ★ Last year: 40 ▼

The Reasons: Few would begrudge Miguel Cotto a happy ending to his illustrious career. Cotto returned in August after 21 months away, competently handling the pressure from granite-chinned but limited Yoshihiro Kamegai and somehow earning a vacant belt. His wide loss to Canelo Alvarez in 2015 ended a reign as RING and lineal middleweight champ. Even that requires a caveat: Cotto destroyed a hobbled Sergio Martinez to win the title. Cotto's most accomplished days were in the previous decade: He had a title run at 140, plus a stint at 147 in which he beat Zab Judah and Shane Mosley, lost a war to Antonio Margarito, edged Joshua Clottey and then was taken apart by Manny Pacquiao. His title run at 154 was against limited opposition and ended against Floyd Mayweather Jr., followed by a clear loss to Austin Trout. Cotto always puts forth a good effort, but it's hard to see him beating today's best at 154 or 160.

The Future: He'll face Sadam Ali on December 2 at Madison Square Garden.

52.



ELEIDER ALVAREZ

The Rundown: Division: Light heavyweight ★ Record: 23-0 (11 KOs) ★ Last year: 88 ▲

The Reasons: Alvarez was one of two Montreal-based up-and-coming light heavyweights who were thought to be on the verge of challenging the top 175-pounders. Neither he nor Artur Beterbiev have lost yet, but both have stalled out waiting for their shots. Alvarez's best win remains his late-2015 majority decision over Isaac Chilemba and a unanimous nod over the faded and always-limited Edison Miranda in 2013. The Chilemba fight made Alvarez mandatory contender to Adonis Stevenson's world title. The fact both men are with adviser Al Haymon probably helped convince Alvarez to take step-aside money and pass his time keeping busy. He has fought four times since, building his name a bit more with two wins at home this year against past-their-prime Montreal favorites Lucian Bute (knocked out in five) and Jean Pascal (outpointed over 12).

The Future: Alvarez apparently will finally get his shot at Stevenson next, though nothing had been made official.

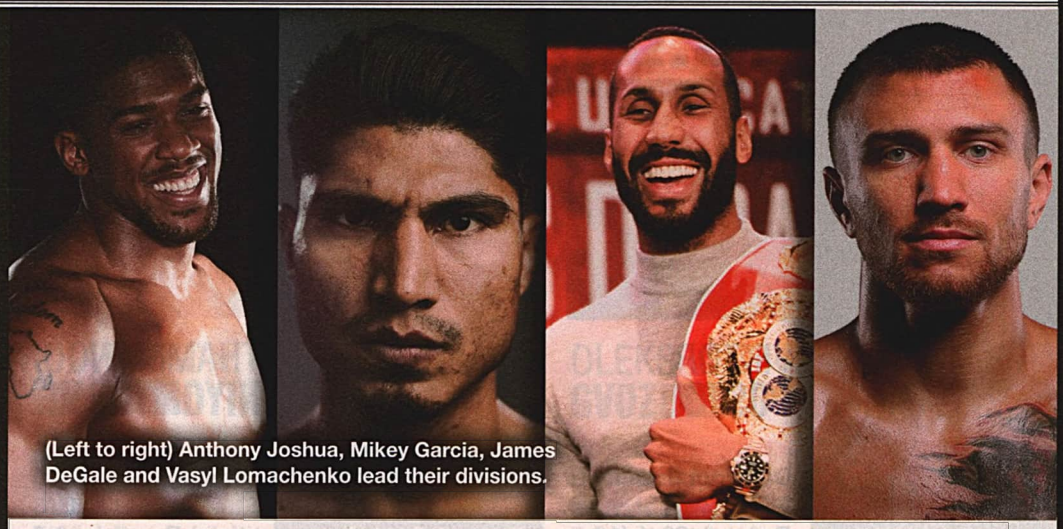
53.

ARTUR BETERBIEV

The Rundown: Division: Light heavyweight ★ Record: 11-0 (11 KOs) ★ Last year: 76 ▲

The Reasons: Beterbiev came out strong, building on his amateur credentials by quickly establishing some professional ones against faded former titleholders. His sixth fight saw Tavoris Cloud done in two rounds; his eighth fight had Gabriel Campillo out in four. Beterbiev has only fought three times since that fight, which was 2½ years ago. His team turned down a 2015 fight with Sergey Kovalev in favor of taking a title eliminator. Then possible opponents declined offers or fell out. Once one was finally found, Beterbiev suffered an injury that extended his layoff to nearly a year. He has skills and power, but it has been wasted (and untested) since his return against lesser foes such as Ezequiel Maderna (TKO 4) and Isidro Prieto (TKO 1). It also hasn't helped that Beterbiev is trying to part ways with promoter Yvon Michel.

The Future: Some good news, though: With Andre Ward retiring, Beterbiev's November bout with Enrico Koelling is now for a vacant world title.



(Left to right) Anthony Joshua, Mikey Garcia, James DeGale and Vasyl Lomachenko lead their divisions.

RING *100* BY DIVISION

THE NUMBER OF RANKED FIGHTERS IN EACH OF THE 17 WEIGHT CLASSES

HEAVYWEIGHT
21. Anthony Joshua
47. Deontay Wilder
66. Alexander Povetkin
78. Tony Bellew

CRUISERWEIGHT
15. Oleksandr Usyk
34. Murat Gassiev
40. Mairis Briedis
45. Denis Lebedev
58. Krzysztof Glowacki
78. Tony Bellew
88. Yunier Dorticos

LIGHT HEAVYWEIGHT
5. Sergey Kovalev
18. Badou Jack
27. Adonis Stevenson
52. Eleider Alvarez
53. Artur Beterbiev
62. Oleksandr Gvozdyk
93. Dmitry Bivol

SUPER MIDDLEWEIGHT
29. James DeGale
37. Gilberto Ramirez
68. George Groves
77. Callum Smith
84. Chris Eubank Jr.
85. David Benavidez

MIDDLEWEIGHT
1. Gennady Golovkin
6. Canelo Alvarez
20. Jermall Charlo
24. Daniel Jacobs
32. Demetrius Andrade
64. David Lemieux
69. Billy Joe Saunders

JUNIOR MIDDLEWEIGHT
23. Erislandy Lara
32. Demetrius Andrade
33. Jermell Charlo
51. Miguel Cotto
70. Jarrett Hurd
90. Erickson Lubin

WELTERWEIGHT
9. Errol Spence Jr.
11. Keith Thurman
19. Danny Garcia
28. Manny Pacquiao
35. Shawn Porter
41. Kell Brook
74. Lucas Matthysse
83. Jessie Vargas
98. Jeff Horn

JUNIOR WELTERWEIGHT
2. Terence Crawford
7. Mikey Garcia
48. Rances Barthelemy
56. Viktor Postol
65. Adrien Broner
72. Julius Indongo
80. Regis Prograis
96. Josh Taylor

LIGHTWEIGHT
7. Mikey Garcia
17. Jorge Linares
49. Terry Flanagan
63. Robert Easter Jr.

JUNIOR LIGHTWEIGHT
3. Vasyl Lomachenko
38. Miguel Berchelt
39. Jezreel Corrales
42. Gervonta Davis
71. Orlando Salido
75. Nicholas Walters

FEATHERWEIGHT
13. Leo Santa Cruz
16. Carl Frampton
25. Gary Russell Jr.
43. Lee Selby
46. Abner Mares
56. Nonito Donaire
59. Oscar Valdez
67. Scott Quigg
100. Joseph Diaz Jr.

JUNIOR FEATHERWEIGHT
4. Guillermo Rigondeaux
44. Jessie Magdaleno
79. Rey Vargas
95. Juan Carlos Payano
97. Diego De La Hoya

BANTAMWEIGHT
31. Shinsuke Yamanaka
54. Zolani Tete
86. Liborio Solis
92. Zhanat Zhakiyanov
94. Jamie McDonnell
95. Juan Carlos Payano
99. Ryan Burnett

JUNIOR BANTAMWEIGHT
8. Naoya Inoue
10. Wisaksil Wangek
12. Juan Francisco Estrada
26. Carlos Cuadras
30. Roman Gonzalez
50. Khalid Yafai
81. Jerwin Ancajas
92. Rau'shee Warren

FLYWEIGHT
14. Donnie Nietes
22. Kazuto Ioka
61. Daigo Higa

JUNIOR FLYWEIGHT
36. Kosei Tanaka
73. Milan Melindo
76. Hekkie Budler
82. Ryoichi Taguchi
87. Ken Shiro

STRAWWEIGHT
57. Thammanoon Niyomtrong
60. Chayaphon Moonsri
89. Hiroto Kyoguchi

Note: 104 fighters are listed here because four who straddle two divisions (Demetrius Andrade, Tony Bellew, Mikey Garcia and Juan Carlos Payano) are included in both.

54.

ZOLANI **TETE**

The Rundown: Division: Bantamweight (WBO title) ★ Record: 25-3 (20 KOs) ★ Last year: 71 ▲

The Reasons: We've been fans of the highly skilled Tete for some time, so it has been nice to see him rebuild in recent years. That was no given. Tete had held a world title at 115 – knocking out Juan Carlos Sanchez Jr. for the opportunity, outpointing Teiru Kinoshita for the belt and stopping Paul Butler in his sole defense. But he vacated when the money for a bout with mandatory challenger McJoe Arroyo wasn't to his liking. There was no guarantee he'd get another shot, given how tough an opponent he is and his lack of leverage. But a deal with Frank Warren gave him a new home in the U.K. and more opportunities. Now at 118, he won a wide decision in April over Arthur Villanueva – whose only loss was to Arroyo one division below – for an interim title. Tete has since been elevated to a full titleholder.

The Future: Tete faces Siboniso Gonya on November 8. Warren had wanted a unification fight for Tete vs. Ryan Burnett, who instead will face fellow titleholder Zhanat Zhakiyanov next.

55.

VIKTOR **POSTOL**

The Rundown: Division: Junior welterweight ★ Record: 29-1 (12 KOs) ★ Last year: 33 ▼

The Reasons: Postol needed just one night to ascend to the top of the 140-pound weight class and then was knocked from that perch in his very next fight. He boxed, bruised and beat the fight out of Lucas Matthysse in late 2015, scoring a surprising 10th-round stoppage after injuring Matthysse's eye. As big as that win was, there was a big difference between beating Matthysse and trying to beat Terence Crawford. The official scores show Postol as taking two or three rounds against Crawford. It's hard to remember his notable moments. Crawford dropped Postol twice and easily outboxed him for a wide decision and the RING championship. The setback knocked Postol down an echelon. He then was inactive for more than a year, hurting his standing in the division even more. Postol's comeback in September was rough; he was dropped hard before coming back to outpoint extremely awkward prospect Jamshidbek Najmiddinov.

The Future: Postol might face Regis Prograis in a title eliminator.

56.

NONITO **DONAIRE**

The Rundown: Division: Featherweight ★ Record: 38-4 (24 KOs) ★ Last year: 32 ▼

The Reasons: Donaire has now come up short in his three biggest fights dating back to 2013. He's clearly not the dominating force whose wins at 118 and 122 brought so much attention earlier in the decade. We still can't say for certain that the former four-division titleholder is done, even if his 35th birthday in November suggests he's an aging veteran in a younger man's sport. He lost to Guillermo Rigondeaux (one of the best in the business), moved up to 126 and soon ran into Nicholas Walters, who sent Donaire packing back down to junior featherweight. Donaire scored four wins over largely pedestrian opposition and was drawn into a war by one of them, outpointing Cesar Juarez in 2015. Then came last year's title defense against rising contender Jessie Magdaleno, who had the best performance of his career. The fight was much closer than the scorecards suggested, but Donaire lost. Magdaleno declined to give Donaire a rematch. Instead, Donaire outpointed Ruben Hernandez in September.

The Future: Nothing was set.

57.

THAMMANOON **NIYOMTRONG**

The Rundown: Division: Strawweight (WBA title) ★ Record: 16-0 (7 KOs) ★ Last year: 80 ▲

The Reasons: Niyomtrong is more than his awesome nom de guerre – Knockout CP Freshmart. He has put together a strong eight-fight stretch over the past three years. It began with a close unanimous decision over undefeated contender Carlos Buitrago, who himself was coming off a strong win over fellow contender Julian Yedras and a draw in a title fight with Merlito Sabillo. Niyomtrong then outpointed ancient former titleholder Muhammad Rachman, stopped contender Alexis Diaz in four, won a wider decision over Buitrago in their rematch and then edged Byron Rojas, who was coming off a victory over vaunted titleholder Hekkie Budler. Since then, Niyomtrong has defeated two foes who fell short in previous title fights (Shin Ono and Go Odaira) and fended off mandatory challenger Rey Loreto in a hard scrap. All of this combines to give Niyomtrong a better ledger at 105 than anyone else fighting there.

The Future: Niyomtrong's next defense had not yet been announced.

58.

KRZYSZTOF **GLOWACKI**

The Rundown: Division: Cruiserweight ★ Record: 28-1 (18 KOs) ★ Last year: 47 ▼

The Reasons: Glowacki deserves our credit for the fighters he beat. He also deserves our understanding in light of those to whom he lost. But beyond that, he needs to do something of note sometime soon. It's just hard to see that happening. Glowacki's biggest win remains his come-from-behind TKO of Marco Huck in 2015, getting off the canvas to end Huck's long title reign in a thriller. Glowacki then successfully defended with a decision over aged former titleholder Steve Cunningham before having the misfortune of facing Oleksandr Usyk next. Usyk boxed circles around Glowacki en route to a wide win. Glowacki bounced back in June by stopping prospect Hizni Altunkaya. He's now a reserve in the World Boxing Super Series tournament, which means he'll stay busy on undercards but won't get to face any of the other top 200-pounders unless one of them has to pull out. He stopped Leonardo Bruzzese in September.

The Future: Glowacki's next bout hadn't been determined.

59.

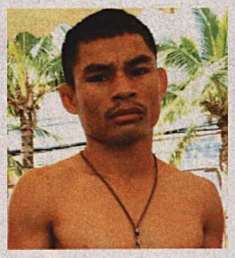
OSCAR VALDEZ

The Rundown:
Division: Featherweight (WBO title) ★ Record: 23-0 (19 KOs) ★ Last year: 57 ▼

The Reasons:
For years, Valdez was groomed by Top Rank. The two-time Olympian developed his craft on the promoter's undercards and smaller shows, impressing along the way as he cut through the likes of Chris Avalos and Evgeny Gradovich. Then, with Vasyl Lomachenko heading from 126 to 130, Valdez got a gimme of a title shot, taking out Matias Rueda in two rounds. He has grown and faced tougher opposition since then, particularly in his last two defenses, decision wins in battles with Miguel Marriaga and Genesis Servania. Valdez has plenty of pop, though it doesn't go as far at this higher level. He'll also need to shore up bad habits, namely loading up on power punches and backing out of range with his hands down. The latter allowed Servania to drop Valdez at one point and hurt him at another. A smarter Valdez will be an even more formidable fighter.

The Future:
Valdez's fourth title defense hadn't been set. Bob Arum floated Carl Frampton as one possibility.

60.



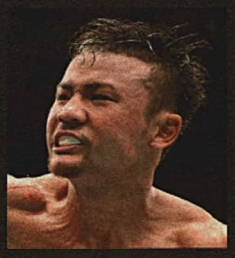
CHAYAPHON MOONSRI

The Rundown:
Division: Strawweight (WBC title) ★ Record: 48-0 (17 KOs) ★ Last year: 83 ▲

The Reasons:
Sorting through Moonsri's record involves removing a lot of chaff to get to the wheat. He, like many Thai fighters, has built his record by staying busy against a series of no-hopers. Moonsri, also known as Wanheng Menayothin, has thankfully provided far more substance in recent years. A title reign that began three years ago with a TKO of Oswaldo Novoa now includes seven successful defenses over the course of his last 12 outings. In particular, his three most recent title fights brought a decision win over mandatory contender Saul Juarez, a close victory in a tough battle with unbeaten Melvin Jerusalem and then a wide victory over Omari Kimweri. Previously, he outpointed undefeated Jeffrey Galero and stopped Jerry Tomogdan, Young Gil Bae and Go Odaira.

The Future:
Moonsri is expected to face recently deposed titleholder Tatsuya Fukuhara on November 24.

61.



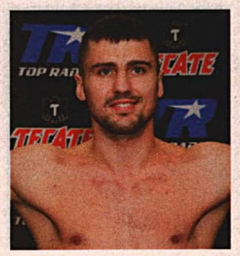
DAIGO HIGA

The Rundown:
Division: Flyweight (WBC title) ★ Record: 13-0 (13 KOs) ★ Last year: unranked ▲

The Reasons:
Japan has had a number of prodigies in recent years, fighters who've rocketed skyward early in their careers and/or at young ages. Higa is another; he was 22 when he won a world title this past May, putting Juan Hernandez Navarrete on the canvas five times en route to a sixth-round stoppage. That made 13 KOs in 13 fights for Higa, who cut his teeth in sparring sessions against other top-notch names. His biggest wins before then were against Jakkrawut Majoogoen (an unbeaten but untested prospect) and Ardin Diale (who had been defeated by several recognizable names). Navarrete was admittedly a step down from the recent titleholders at 112 – he'd just picked up a vacant belt in their absence – though his only other defeat was a decision loss to Kazuto Ioka in 2011 back when both were at strawweight.

The Future:
Higa's first defense will be against Thomas Masson in October. He also owes a mandatory to Muhammad Waseem.

62.



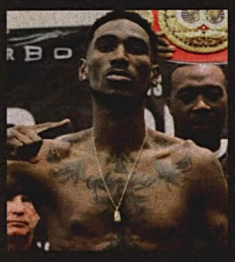
OLEKSANDR GVOZDYK

The Rundown:
Division: Light heavyweight ★ Record: 14-0 (12 KOs) ★ Last year: unranked ▲

The Reasons:
It's not just who you beat, but how. Gvozdyk wasn't the first to defeat Yunieski Gonzalez, but he was the first to stop him. It was expected to be a competitive, entertaining battle between the 2012 Olympic bronze medalist and Gonzalez, who'd gotten ripped off against Jean Pascal and then came up short against Vyacheslav Shabranskyy in 2015. Gvozdyk quickly showed his superiority, landing combinations while making Gonzalez miss, then dropping and stopping him in the third. It was his biggest win yet. Before that were stoppages of Nadjib Mohammedi, Tommy Karpency (who put Gvozdyk down early) and Isaac Chilemba. Gvozdyk stayed busy this past August, scoring a TKO over Craig Baker in six in what was a patient and not overly thrilling victory.

The Future:
Gvozdyk could aim for one of the titles vacated when Andre Ward retired. That seems a more likely path than the elimination bout with Marcus Browne that the WBC is calling for.

63.



ROBERT EASTER JR.

The Rundown:
Division: Lightweight (IBF title) ★ Record: 20-0 (14 KOs) ★ Last year: 85 ▲

The Reasons:
Easter is a fan-friendly fighter. That has been a very good thing for him so far, though it's also fair to wonder whether it'll soon be his undoing. The lanky lightweight overpowered most of his opponents early on, including a TKO of former 130-pound titleholder Argenis Mendez in 2016. Once he faced foes who not only could take his power but also dish it out in return, he got drawn into difficult scraps. Easter fended off a stiff challenge from previously unbeaten Richard Commey to win a vacant title. His first defense was easy, as he put Luis Cruz down three times en route to a wide decision victory. Easter had another thriller this June, though, against Denis Shafikov, who'd just defeated Commey himself. Ignore the scorecards, which had two judges giving Easter a shutout win. It was another close, entertaining battle.

The Future:
Easter's third title defense had not yet been set. Mike Garcia's team is also interested in a unification bout.

64.

DAVID LEMIEUX

The Rundown:
Division: Middleweight ★ Record: 38-3 (33 KOs) ★ Last year: 81 ▲

The Reasons:
Lemieux isn't the best at 160. That much was evident when he lost to Gennady Golovkin in 2015. That's fine. He still has a chance to show how he stacks up against the rest of the top middleweights. Lemieux's power remains formidable; look no further than the left hook that turned out Curtis Stevens' lights in March. Lemieux fought again in May, taking a wide decision over Marcos Reyes to run his winning streak to four. Lemieux hurt his hand in that fight and has been sidelined since. He has improved considerably from the prospect who lost to Marco Antonio Rubio and Joachim Alcine back in 2011. He can still be outboxed so long as you can handle what lands. Perhaps that's why Billy Joe Saunders has traded words with Lemieux and Demetrius Andrade has pondered moving up from 154 to meet him.

The Future:
Lemieux is slated to return in December. While he is Saunders' mandatory, he's hoping instead for a bigger fight against Miguel Cotto.

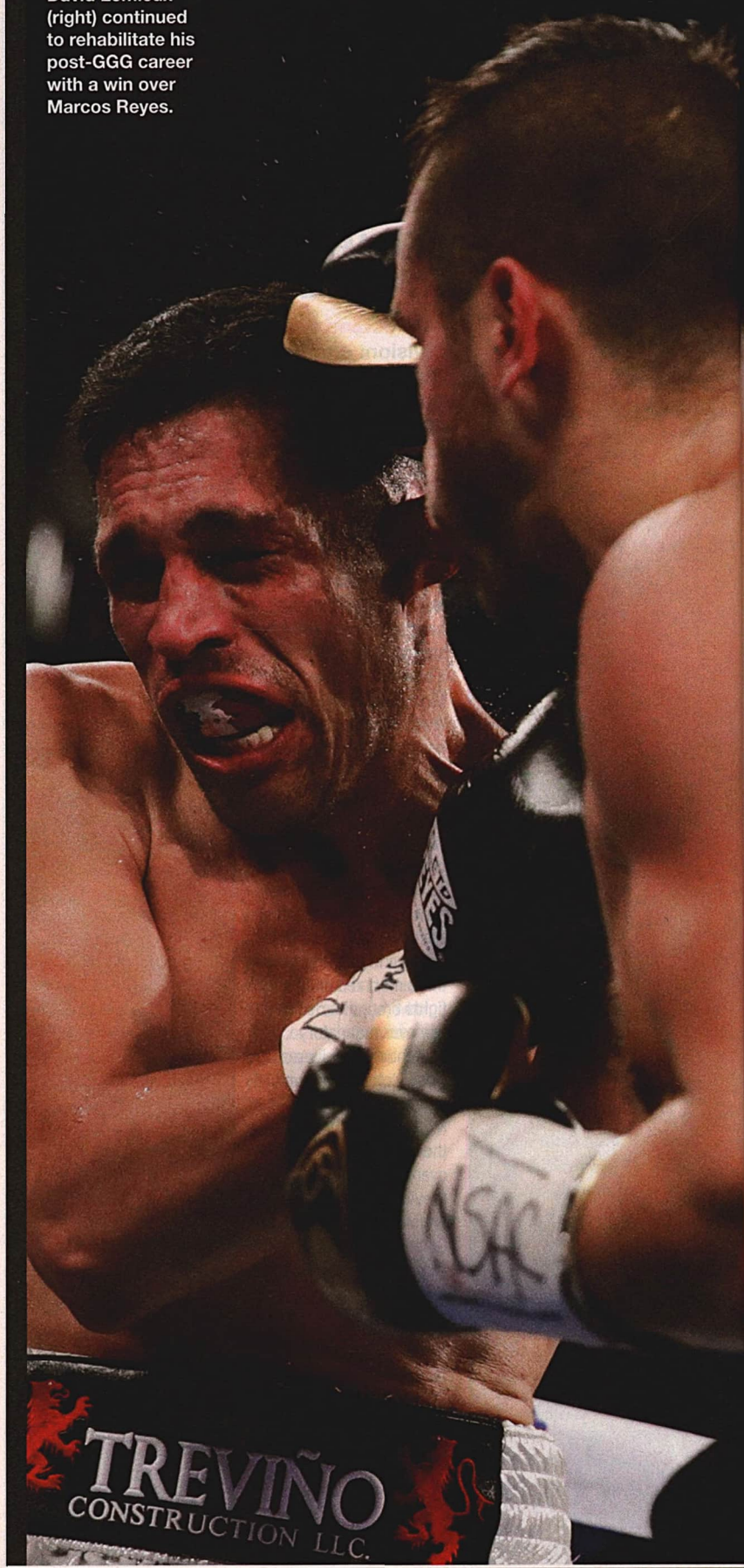
65.

ADRIEN BRONER

The Rundown:
Division: Junior welterweight ★ Record: 33-3 (24 KOs) ★ Last year: 49 ▼

The Reasons:
Broner's place in this sport dwindles with each defeat. That may seem harsh for a guy whose only losses came in decisions against Marcos Maidana (2013), Shawn Porter (2015) and Mikey Garcia (2017). Those are good fighters, but those were also the only three times that Broner really stepped up from the Ashley Theophane and John Molina level. We realized long ago Broner's talent didn't merit the hype and marketing. And whatever talent IS there just doesn't come out when it counts. Despite world titles in four divisions, his biggest wins remain a fantastic performance against Antonio DeMarco at lightweight in 2012 and a decision over Paulie Malignaggi in 2013. He says he doesn't care because we'll still watch and he'll still get paid. At this point, however, Broner's about to confront the law of diminishing returns.

The Future:
Lucas Matthysse has been rumored to be a possible opponent for Broner.



David Lemieux (right) continued to rehabilitate his post-GGG career with a win over Marcos Reyes.

66.

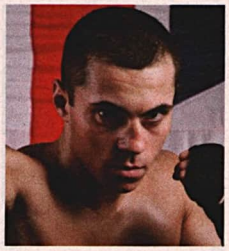
ALEXANDER **POVETKIN**

The Rundown: **Division: Heavyweight ★ Record: 32-1 (23 KOs) ★ Last year: 58 ▼**

The Reasons: Povetkin is here (and in this magazine's heavyweight ratings) despite his failed drug tests because he is following the drug-testing protocol set out for him. He has put together six wins since his ugly loss to Wladimir Klitschko in 2013, including knockouts of Manuel Charr, Carlos Takam, Mike Perez, Mariusz Wach and Johann Duhaupas. Povetkin's only fight so far in 2017 was a shutout of Andriy Rudenko, who had lost previously to Lucas Browne and Hughie Fury. The power and skills are still there at 38, though the tests that led to canceled fights with Deontay Wilder and Bermane Stiverne will leave many skeptical.

The Future: Povetkin's back in the good graces of sanctioning bodies, which will help him work his way toward another title shot. He'll need their backing, as opponents may not want to chance another positive test and cancellation. Povetkin is tentatively scheduled to return on December 15.

67.



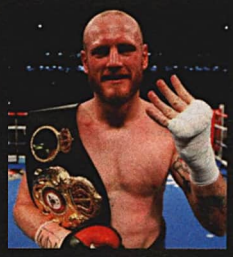
SCOTT **QUIGG**

The Rundown: **Division: Featherweight ★ Record: 33-1-2 (24 KOs) ★ Last year: 69 ▲**

The Reasons: Quigg fought his way into contention at junior featherweight but fell short in his one big chance there, dropping a split decision to Carl Frampton in early 2016. Quigg did have to fight through a broken jaw, and he went from a tentative start to coming on strong down the stretch. He's only fought twice since. He had to heal, of course. Quigg returned late last year at featherweight, stopping Jose Cayetano, and then made another change by leaving trainer Joe Gallagher in favor of Freddie Roach. Their first pairing was a decent showing. Quigg outworked and outlanded Viorel Simion in a battle, earning a future shot at a world title. He's got what it takes to be a contender. He needs to show whether he can advance beyond that when he's in with someone who is similarly talented.

The Future: Though Quigg's win over Simion put him in position to challenge IBF titleholder Lee Selby, his November 4 bout against Oleg Yefimovych was designated an eliminator for the WBA belt.

68.



GEORGE **GROVES**

The Rundown: **Division: Super middleweight (WBA title) ★ Record: 26-3 (19 KOs) ★ Last year: unranked ▲**

The Reasons: Groves at last has a world title. It helps, of course, that his fourth try wasn't against Carl Froch (who beat him twice) and Badou Jack. Those are three defeats against very good fighters, and Groves was competitive with both. It's possible that losses can signify a fighter's limit. They can also help make him battle-tested. Groves put together a five-fight win streak after the split decision loss to Jack, culminating in a bout this past May against Fedor Chudinov, whose only loss had come to a doped-up Felix Sturm. Groves stopped Chudinov in six. He also owns a narrow nod over James DeGale from when both were young. A rematch now would be intriguing. So would fights against titleholders David Benavidez and Gilberto Ramirez.

The Future: But first, Groves is participating in the World Boxing Super Series tournament. He was scheduled to face unbeaten prospect Jamie Cox on October 14. Beyond that loom tougher outs like Chris Eubank Jr. and Callum Smith.

69.

BILLY JOE **SAUNDERS**

The Rundown: **Division: Middleweight (WBO title) ★ Record: 25-0 (12 KOs) ★ Last year: 70 ▲**

The Reasons: Saunders is a good boxer, but he's had an underwhelming two years with just two defenses of his world title. He is mostly to blame, though not completely. He went nearly a year without defending his world title, which he won with a good performance against Andy Lee in late 2015. There was an injury, and then there was talk but no agreement for a rematch with Chris Eubank Jr. (whom Saunders edged in 2014) or bouts with Gennady Golovkin and Daniel Jacobs. He also turned down a bout on a Canelo Alvarez undercard that could've led to a fight with Canelo, and then had a disappointing performance in a win over unheralded Artur Akavov. Saunders then had a mandatory defense canceled when Avtandil Khurtsidze was arrested. Saunders' first fight of 2017 was in September against Willie Monroe; Saunders won a boring outing.

The Future: Saunders' title is his only leverage for unification with Golovkin or Canelo. He should aim for another big name in the meantime.

70.

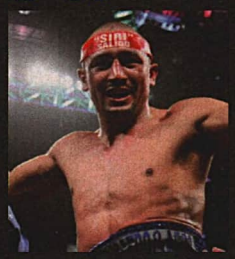
JARRETT **HURD**

The Rundown: **Division: Junior middleweight (IBF title) ★ Record: 20-0 (14 KOs) ★ Last year: unranked ▲**

The Reasons: Most fighters pad their records on small shows until their limitations are exposed at a higher level and under brighter lights. Not Hurd. His brief time in the spotlight has revealed poise, technique and talent, though there's still a question of how those traits will measure up against the best junior middleweights. Hurd fought most of his early outings in Washington, D.C., and his native Maryland. Then he got his opportunity on a late 2015 episode of "ShoBox," giving a fellow prospect his first defeat. That got Showtime's attention. The network and adviser Al Haymon featured him on the Keith Thurman-Shawn Porter card, on which Hurd dispatched Oscar Molina in 10. He was too big and too much for Jo Jo Dan, and then he got his big opportunity in February, overcoming a determined effort from prospect Tony Harrison and scoring a ninth-round TKO. The victory earned Hurd a vacant title left behind by Jermall Charlo.

The Future: A good test is next: Hurd was due to face former titleholder Austin Trout on October 14.

71.



ORLANDO SALIDO

The Rundown: Division: Junior lightweight ★ Record: 44-13-4 (31 KOs) ★ Last year: 53 ▼

The Reasons: Salido belongs here even though hasn't won a notable fight since 2014. That year, he came in overweight against Vasyl Lomachenko, got away with too many low blows and still was held to a split-decision victory over the early pro version of Lomachenko. Salido won an absolute war with Terdsak Jandaeng afterward. Yet Salido makes this list because he continues to give top junior lightweights hell, even if he's visiting the canvas more often in the process these days. He went on to lose to Roman Martinez in 2015 and then was robbed in a rematch draw five months later. Last year, Salido drew with then-titleholder Francisco Vargas but delivered so much punishment that Vargas was a fraction of himself against Miguel Berchelt. Salido had nearly a year off afterward, the result of an injury and fights falling apart in negotiations. He came back in May, once again getting off the canvas to stop Aristides Perez.

The Future: Two opponents have been mentioned: Jonathan Oquendo in November or a title shot against Miguel Berchelt in December.

72.

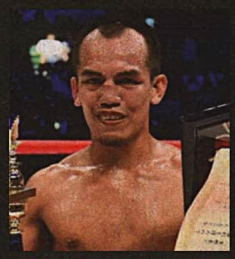
JULIUS INDONGO

The Rundown: Division: Junior welterweight ★ Record: 22-1 (11 KOs) ★ Last year: unranked ▲

The Reasons: As rapidly as Indongo ascended, he fell even faster. He quickly learned that there's a big difference between No. 1 and No. 2 at junior welterweight, especially when that No. 1 is Terence Crawford. Indongo was otherwise good enough to capture two world titles in the span of 4½ months, knocking out Eduard Troyanovsky with a single left hand in just 40 seconds and then going 12 to take a decision over Ricky Burns. Troyanovsky and Burns could never be compared with Crawford, who amped up the contrast in their contest. Indongo was down in the second and then felled for good in the third after a perfect counter body shot. Now comes the part of Indongo's career that'll be as telling as this defeat – seeing how he measures up against opponents who aren't among the best boxers in the world.

The Future: Indongo's first fight back hadn't been announced. But if Crawford drops his titles and heads to 147, as expected, then Indongo could compete for a title again soon.

73.



MILAN MELINDO

The Rundown: Division: Junior flyweight (IBF title) ★ Record: 37-2 (13 KOs) ★ Last year: unranked ▲

The Reasons: Just because Melindo is a new entrant doesn't mean he has only recently stepped up. He has actually had plenty of good tests and learning experiences along the way. He beat former titleholders Muhammad Rachmann and Carlos Tamara back in 2009 and 2010, respectively. Melindo lost a clear decision to Juan Francisco Estrada at flyweight in 2013 but showed promise. He soon dropped back down to 108, only to lose again, this time in a cut-shortened six-round technical decision to Javier Mendoza in 2015. Melindo's third title try was the charm. He blew out Akira Yaegashi with three knockdowns in one round this past May and then bolstered his resume with a good, bloody encounter against Hekkie Budler – a very skilled former 105-pound titleholder – in September. It hasn't been an easy road for Melindo, but he's on the right track.

The Future: Melindo's second defense hadn't been scheduled. Early signs point to February against the winner of Randy Petalcorin vs. Felix Alvarado.

74.

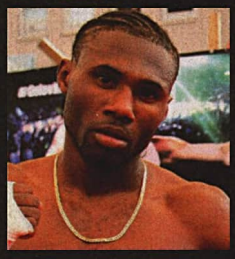
LUCAS MATTHYSSE

The Rundown: Division: Welterweight ★ Record: 38-4 (35 KOs) ★ Last year: 50 ▼

The Reasons: Matthysse's return in May brought his first win in two years. That layoff followed a stunning loss to Viktor Postol, who put Matthysse down on one knee for the full count in part because of an eye injury. Matthysse needed time away to heal physical and mental wounds after his first clear setback. There had been disputed split-decision losses to Zab Judah and Devon Alexander before he turned himself into the most feared man at 140, peaking with a third-round TKO of Lamont Peterson in 2013. Matthysse then lost a competitive unification bout with Danny Garcia. Afterward came wins in wars over John Molina and Ruslan Provodnikov. "The Machine" could be hit and hurt; Postol, unlike Molina and Provodnikov, knew how to dodge. Matthysse did look refreshed in his comeback while making short work of Emanuel Taylor, who is gritty but undersized.

The Future: Matthysse has been rumored to be a possible opponent for Adrien Broner or even Miguel Cotto.

75.



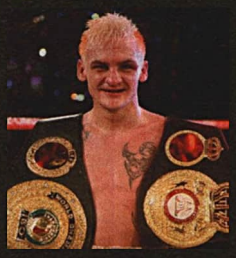
NICHOLAS WALTERS

The Rundown: Division: Junior lightweight ★ Record: 26-1-1 (21 KOs) ★ Last year: 45 ▼

The Reasons: On the surface, you'll see that Walters has just lost once, and that it came against Vasyl Lomachenko. But Walters has been on a bad run beyond being outclassed and made to quit by one of the best boxers in the world. The fighter who surged onto the scene with his TKO over Nonito Donaire in 2014 has done too little since. Illness postponed his first title defense, and then he came in overweight against Miguel Marriaga, winning the decision but losing his belt on the scale. A draw against Jason Sosa to end 2015 isn't as bad as it seems; Walters deserved the win. He then lost even more momentum, turning down offers and sitting out nearly all of 2016. He hadn't fought yet in 2017 either, pulling out of an August fight after falling ill.

The Future: No comeback date had been announced. Walters will need to put together a couple of good wins if he's to contend again.

76.



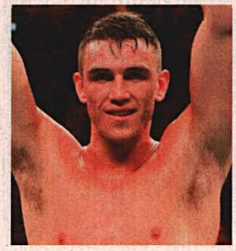
HEKKIE BUDLER

The Rundown:
Division: Junior flyweight ★ Record: 31-3 (10 KOs) ★ Last year: 73 ▼

The Reasons:
Budler is 2-2 in his last four but showed enough in his most recent defeat to receive the benefit of the doubt. His career began at 108, where he was a contender until a split-decision loss to Gideon Buthelezi in 2011. A move to 105 proved wise. Budler won 12 straight there, including victories over former titleholders Florante Condes, Nkosinathi Joyi and Chao Zhong Xiong. He stopped Karluis Diaz in one round to win a world title and made four successful defenses before losing a surprising decision to Byron Rojas in 2016. Budler moved back to junior flyweight afterward, winning two fights and then challenging Milan Melindo, who'd recently won a world title over Akira Yaegashi. Budler and Melindo had a good battle in September. While Melindo won a split decision, Budler should hold his head up high – for now. He still needs a win of consequence soon to stay relevant.

The Future:
Budler's next step hadn't been announced.

77.



CALLUM SMITH

The Rundown:
Division: Super middleweight ★ Record: 23-0 (17 KOs) ★ Last year: unranked ▲

The Reasons:
Early in 2016, Smith came to the U.S. to watch Badou Jack vs. James DeGale, hoping to land the winner. He has yet to get that kind of opportunity, though he's at last in the process of moving forward again. There had been momentum before, when Smith won decisions over Nikola Sjekloca (who'd gone the distance with Arthur Abraham and Sakio Bika) in 2014 and Christopher Rebrasse (who'd lost on the cards to George Groves) in 2015. Smith wrapped up that year with a one-round TKO of fellow undefeated prospect Rocky Fielding. He stayed busy in 2016 but didn't fight this year until September. Title fights fell apart. Badou Jack moved up to 175. Anthony Dirrell withdrew. The shot at the vacant belt went to two other fighters. Smith entered the World Boxing Super Series tournament, winning his quarterfinal bout by fending off a strong mid-rounds effort from fellow contender Erik Skoglund for the decision win.

The Future:
Smith's semifinal will be against the winner of Juergen Braehmer vs. Rob Brant.

78.

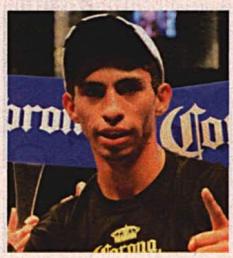
TONY BELLEW

The Rundown:
Division: Cruiserweight/ heavyweight ★ Record: 29-2-1 (19 KOs) ★ Last year: 92 ▲

The Reasons:
Bellew was written off four years ago. That was apparently premature. Sure, he'd reached his limit at 175, losing a decision to Nathan Cleverly in 2011, fighting his way back into contention and then suffering a crushing stoppage loss to Adonis Stevenson. But Bellew surprisingly found new life at cruiserweight and, even more surprisingly, at heavyweight. He's 7-0 at 200 pounds, with his past three wins there bringing a decision over fringe contender Mateusz Masternak, a surprising third-round TKO of Ilunga Makabu and then an eight-minute drubbing of BJ Flores. Bellew seemed to be cashing out when he jumped up another weight class to challenge David Haye this past March. Haye dominated early before injuring his Achilles tendon. Bellew absorbed the punishment and fought through a broken hand to stop Haye in 11.

The Future:
Bellew and Haye were scheduled to meet again on December 17.

79.



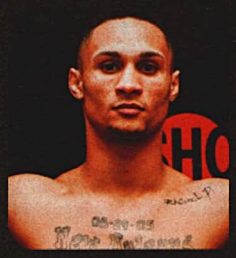
REY VARGAS

The Rundown:
Division: Junior featherweight (WBC title) ★ Record: 30-0 (22 KOs) ★ Last year: unranked ▲

The Reasons:
Vargas was just 19 when he turned pro after a good amateur career. He began with no-hopers and then moved up to a mix of lower-level opposition and foes far past their primes and ideal weight classes. Vargas truly stepped up in the past two years and hit his stride; he is flourishing under the guidance of trainer Nacho Beristain. In 2016, he outpointed Alexis Kabore (who hadn't lost since his pro debut) and ended Alexander Munoz's career with a TKO. This year, Vargas got a shot at a vacant title and took a majority decision over contender Gavin McDonnell. His first defense came in August against Ronny Rios, who had rebounded decently from a 2014 TKO loss to Robinson Castellanos. Vargas threw nearly twice as many punches and withstood a competitive effort from Rios for the unanimous-decision win.

The Future:
Vargas owes a fight to mandatory Julio Ceja, and the winner of that bout will need to defend against whomever wins Diego De La Hoya vs. Hugo Ruiz.

80.



REGIS PROGRAIS

The Rundown:
Division: Junior welterweight ★ Record: 20-0 (17 KOs) ★ Last year: unranked ▲

The Reasons:
Prograis turned pro in 2012 after coming up short in the U.S. Olympic Trials. He's had much more success in the pros, with the last couple of years bringing some confident matchmaking on the part of his team. Prograis was featured in the main event of ShoBox, a series often intended to pit prospects against each other. He broke down previously unbeaten Abel Ramos for a TKO win that night in December 2015. Prograis then headlined on the series again, needing less than one round to knock out Aaron Herrera. He subsequently made short work of two more foes before returning to ShoBox again this past June. Once more, he got in with a fellow prospect, taking out Joel Diaz Jr. in two. Prograis is an impressive 28-year-old who stands out among the up-and-comers at 140 and now has to be considered a contender.

The Future:
Prograis is in position for an elimination bout, likely against former titleholder Viktor Postol.

81.

JERWIN ANCAJAS

The Rundown: Division: Junior bantamweight (IBF title) ★ Record: 27-1-1 (18 KOs) ★ Last year: unranked ▲

The Reasons: There wasn't much of anything on Ancajas' record to explain why he was named mandatory contender to McJoe Arroyo's world title. He'd beaten 11 opponents in a row since suffering his only loss, but you'd be hard-pressed to find a fighter of consequence among them. Nevertheless, Ancajas showed why he deserved the shot when he outpointed Arroyo to win the belt in September 2016. His promoter, Manny Pacquiao, put Ancajas' second title defense in a spotlight position on the undercard of the Pacquiao-Horn fight. Ancajas successfully defended with a TKO of Teiru Kinoshita, whose only other loss was to Zolani Tete. Ancajas is also on the radar of HBO, which is looking to put together another card featuring top 115-pounders.

The Future: But before then, Ancajas has a defense against unbeaten prospect Jamie Conlan scheduled for November 18 and will need to be particularly impressive to win in Conlan's native Northern Ireland.

82.

RYOICHI TAGUCHI

The Rundown: Division: Junior flyweight (WBA title) ★ Record: 26-2-2 (12 KOs) ★ Last year: 86 ▲

The Reasons: Taguchi is the longest-reigning of the four titleholders at 108. He went 9-0-1 after his first defeat, including a TKO of future titleholder Yu Kimura. The streak ended only because he ran into Naoya Inoue early in Inoue's career. Taguchi soon bounced back, outpointing past-his-prime former titleholder Florante Condes and then unseating Alberto Rossel for a belt to wrap up 2014. He has gone 5-0-1 in his defenses, stopping one former titleholder in Ekavit Songnui and outpointing another in Ryo Miyazaki, and scoring TKOs over perpetual bridesmaids Luis de la Rosa and Juan Jose Landaeta. Taguchi was held to a draw against Carlos Canizales at the end of 2016, admittedly thrown off by Canizales' style. There was no such problem against Robert Barrera in July. Taguchi won in nine. Barrera's only other loss came by split decision against Canizales.

The Future: Taguchi wants unification with countryman Kosei Tanaka, who is currently injured. His next defense hadn't been announced.

83.

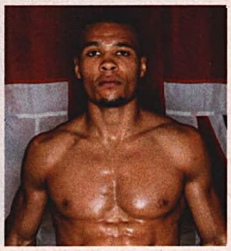
JESSIE VARGAS

The Rundown: Division: Welterweight ★ Record: 27-2 (10 KOs) ★ Last year: 68 ▼

The Reasons: Vargas had the reputation of a fighter who won controversial decisions, as victories over Josesito Lopez in 2011 and Khabib Allakhverdiev and Anton Novikov in 2014 were all questionable. Those performances seemed to reveal Vargas' limitations. However, he looked much better against Antonio DeMarco and then moved up to welterweight in 2015 to challenge Tim Bradley for a world title. Vargas lost clearly but was buoyed by a big punch that rocked Bradley badly with seconds to go. Vargas felt Bradley was saved when the referee jumped in too early after mistaking the 10-second warning for the final bell. When Bradley dropped his title for a third fight with Manny Pacquiao, Vargas was there to win the vacant belt, stopping prospect Sadam Ali. He lost in his first defense; Pacquiao outclassed him in November 2016.

The Future: To be announced. Vargas took the Pacquiao loss in stride as a learning experience but hasn't fought since.

84.



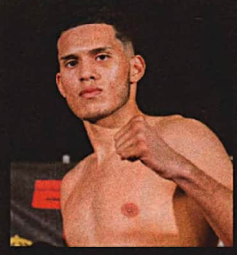
CHRIS EUBANK JR.

The Rundown: Division: Super middleweight ★ Record: 26-1 (20 KOs) ★ Last year: unranked ▲

The Reasons: Eubank rebounded from his only defeat and recovered from some questionable career choices to become a super middleweight contender. That's impressive for someone who didn't have an extensive amateur career. Instead, Eubank learned on the job after turning pro in 2011 and was 18-0 when he met fellow middleweight prospect Billy Joe Saunders in 2014. Saunders won a close split decision and went on to win a world title. Eubank came back three months later and stopped Fedor Chudinov but failed to take the next step, as his team infamously negotiated themselves out of a deal to fight Gennady Golovkin in 2016. Eubank nonetheless has been able to move forward, moving up to 168 earlier this year and then winning a wide decision over Arthur Abraham in July. He made short work of Avni Yildirim in October in a WBSS quarterfinal.

The Future: Eubank's semifinal foe will be the George Groves-Jamie Cox winner.

85.



DAVID BENAVIDEZ

The Rundown: Division: Super middleweight (WBC title) ★ Record: 19-0 (17 KOs) ★ Last year: unranked ▲

The Reasons: Sampson Lewkowicz has a reputation for discovering talent, including Manny Pacquiao and Sergio Martinez. In 2015, he proudly announced that he'd signed Benavidez, who had only recently turned 18. Benavidez had already been a pro for two years and soon stepped up. His power and speed remained evident against lower-tier foes, but they were even more impressive this May against Rogelio "Porky" Medina, who'd recently given James DeGale a tough battle. Benavidez dropped Medina three times and finished him with an extended, brutal flurry. His next bout was much tougher. Benavidez faced 18-1 Ronald Gavril for a vacant title in September. It was a highly competitive bout. Benavidez was knocked down in the 12th but got up to take the split decision. He turns 21 in December and already is poised and powerful. He'll only get better as his body and mind continue to mature.

The Future: Lewkowicz says Benavidez might have a rematch against Gavril in early 2018.

86.

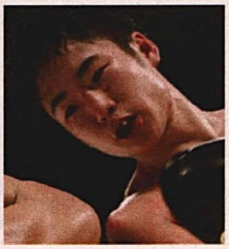
LIBORIO SOLIS

The Rundown:
Division: Bantamweight ★ Record: 25-5-1 (11 KOs) ★ Last year: unranked ▲

The Reasons:
The official record shows Solis losing a unanimous decision to contender Jamie McDonnell last year. It's not unanimous. We say that Solis deserved the victory and a better spot on this list than McDonnell. The past several years have been the most eventful for the 35-year-old. Solis turned pro in 2000 yet was just 3-0-1 until 2007. He received a split nod over Jose Salgado in 2011 to earn a title shot and then edged Kohei Kono in 2013 for the belt. He then came in overweight against fellow titleholder Daiki Kameda, winning the bout but losing his belt. Solis' career stalled before challenging top 118-pounder Shinsuke Yamanaka in 2016, scoring an early knockdown but losing a wide decision. Solis has gained valuable experience from his setbacks. He's able to apply that experience at a high level and is still young enough in boxing years thanks to the structure of his career.

The Future: Solis will return from a yearlong layoff with a much-deserved rematch against McDonnell on November 4.

87.



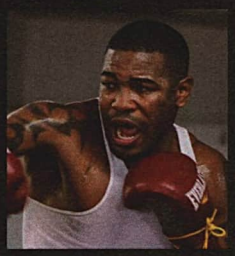
KEN SHIRO

The Rundown:
Division: Junior flyweight (WBC title) ★ Record: 10-0 (5 KOs) ★ Last year: unranked ▲

The Reasons:
Shiro outpointed Ganigan Lopez in May to win a world title. That was a big step up for Shiro, whose nine wins until then had mostly come against lower-level opponents from the Philippines and his native Japan. He got valuable experience going 10 rounds in 2015 with Kenichi Horikawa, a measuring-stick opponent who had lost to several recognizable names between 105 and 112. Then Shiro blasted out Atsushi Kakutani in one, which was three rounds quicker than titleholder Adrian Hernandez had done. Lopez was going to be a much tougher task, a good fighter who'd gone to Japan to win his belt from Yu Kimura in 2016. It was a close bout, with Shiro showing poise and fighting well enough to win a very close majority decision.

The Future: Shiro has another tough test for his first defense, set for October 22: former titleholder and deserving contender Pedro Guevara. Lopez is due a rematch against the winner.

88.



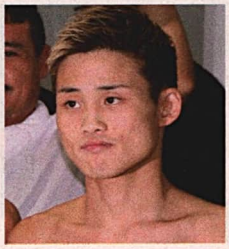
YUNIER DORTICOS

The Rundown:
Division: Cruiserweight ★ Record: 22-0 (21 KOs) ★ Last year: unranked ▲

The Reasons:
Dorticos will never be lumped in with fellow Cubans Guillermo Rigondeaux and Erislandy Lara, two defensive wizards who are brilliantly skilled but are rarely fan-friendly. That's not Dorticos' approach. Look no further than his past two fights to see why he's, well, must-see. Dorticos waged a hellish war with Youri Kalenga in May 2016, knocking him down early, handling his comeback and stopping him in 10. Alas, a delayed (and then canceled) fight with Beibut Shumenov left Dorticos out of the ring for 16 months. He returned this past September as part of the World Boxing Super Series cruiserweight tournament, facing formidable puncher Dmitry Kudryashov, who had gone 1-1 in a pair of slugfests with Olanrewaju Durodola. Dorticos didn't fear Kudryashov's power, approaching him much in the way Kelly Pavlik once did Edison Miranda. Dorticos took the fight to Kudryashov and then dropped him for a second-round KO.

The Future: Dorticos will test his world-class power against world-class opposition: a WBSS semifinal against the winner of Murat Gassiev vs. Krzysztof Wlodarczyk.

89.



HIROTO KYOGUCHI

The Rundown:
Division: Strawweight (IBF title) ★ Record: 8-0 (6 KOs) ★ Last year: unranked ▲

The Reasons:
Kyoguchi only turned pro in April 2016. Fifteen months later, he had a world title around his waist. Kyoguchi's 2017 began with a third-round KO of Armando de la Cruz, who has lost to several recognizable names at 105 and 108. Then came a decision over Jonathan Refugio, also a test for up-and-comers in recent years, including current 105-pound titleholders Thammanoon Niyomtrong and Chayaphon Moonsri. That brought Kyoguchi into a July fight with titleholder Jose Argumedo. Despite his youth and relative inexperience, Kyoguchi showed composure in a spirited and often ugly bout that had plenty of clinching, wild shots and an opponent who led with his head. Kyoguchi knocked Argumedo down in the ninth and then withstood a comeback while exhausted in the final round – digging in, fighting back and taking a unanimous decision.

The Future: Kyoguchi's first defense is expected to come in December against Carlos Buitrago, a contender whose only two losses were against Niyomtrong.

90.

ERICKSON LUBIN

The Rundown:
Division: Junior middleweight ★ Record: 18-0 (13 KOs) ★ Last year: unranked ▲

The Reasons:
Lubin was a top-notch talent as a teen. He opted to turn pro shortly after his 18th birthday in 2013, upsetting the American boxing program, which had hoped he'd remain part of its system and perhaps fight in the 2016 Olympics. Instead, Lubin quickly moved toward measuring-stick opponents Noe Bolanos and Norberto Gonzalez and remained busy. He fought five times in 2015 and four times in 2016. While there were no notable names among his opponents, Lubin did give Ivan Montero and Juan Ubaldo Cabrera their second pro losses. He was maneuvered into a relatively easy bout to set up a title shot, facing Jorge Cota in March. Cota had lost to Marco Antonio Rubio years before and won nine since. Lubin was in a much different class, setting up a big left hand and then landing it to end the fight.

The Future: Next, we were set to see whether the hype is reality or whether the push came too soon. Lubin's title shot against Jermell Charlo was scheduled for October 14.

91.

ZHANAT ZHAKIYANOV

The Rundown:
Division: Bantamweight (WBA title) ★ Record: 27-1 (18 KOs) ★ Last year: unranked ▲

The Reasons:
Zhakiyanov is another Kazakhstani fighter peaking in his 30s. It's been a journey upward for the 118-pounder, who turned pro a decade ago and turns 34 in November. He lost in his sixth pro fight (back in 2008) and continued plugging, stopping one-time flyweight contender Karim Guerfi in 2014 and earning a title shot with a split decision over once-beaten Yonfrez Parejo in November 2015. Zhakiyanov didn't fight again until 15 months later. Rau'shee Warren seemed to be en route to an easy victory when he floored Zhakiyanov twice in the first. Zhakiyanov rose and, befitting the personality of his trainer, Ricky Hatton, kept taking the fight to Warren. He took the lead and triumphed even though he was in Warren's home state, picking up a split decision.

The Future:
Zhakiyanov had a unification bout set for October 21 against Ryan Burnett, who says he "broke" Zhakiyanov in sparring years ago. We'll see. Warren was confident beforehand, too.

92.

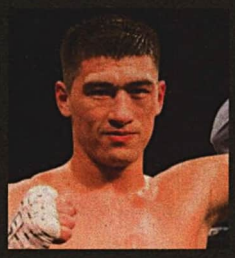
RAU'SHEE WARREN

The Rundown:
Division: Junior bantamweight ★ Record: 15-2 (4 KOs) ★ Last year: 75 ▼

The Reasons:
Warren is 1-2 in world title fights. Each was close. It's been an uphill climb for a fighter who doesn't have much power and was beaten in the opening round of three Olympics. Warren participated in the semipro World Series of Boxing before the 2012 Games and entered the paid ranks in earnest soon afterward. After a few years of further fine-tuning, he challenged Juan Carlos Payano, who'd recently unseated longtime titleholder Anselmo Moreno. It was simultaneously ugly and fun, with plenty of action and fouling. Payano won a split decision. Warren had the edge in their rematch, earning a majority decision. He had a good start in his only defense, knocking Zhanat Zhakiyanov down twice in the first. However, Zhakiyanov battled his way to a split-decision win. Warren has since dropped to 115, getting a wide points victory over former titleholder McJoe Arroyo in July.

The Future:
Warren is due a fight against the winner of Jerwin Ancajas vs. Jamie Conlan.

93.



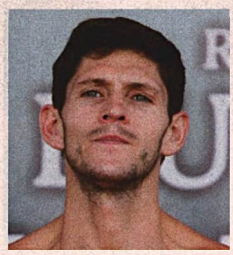
DMITRY BIVOL

The Rundown:
Division: Light heavyweight ★ Record: 11-0 (9 KOs) ★ Last year: unranked ▲

The Reasons:
Bivol is the latest 175-pound contender from the former Soviet Union. He had a strong amateur career, albeit in the shadow of teammate Egor Mekhontsev, who won Olympic gold in 2012. Bivol fought in the World Series of Boxing before turning pro in earnest in 2014. His seventh win was a decision over fellow prospect Felix Valera in 2016. Bivol's 2017 has included three wins showing where he stands in the division: a TKO of Robert Berridge (who went the distance with Eleider Alvarez), a drubbing of Samuel Clarkson (who was on a nine-fight win streak) and a TKO of Cedric Agnew (in three fewer rounds than it took Kovalev).

The Future:
Bivol was scheduled to fight for a world title against Trent Broadhurst on November 4. Broadhurst is an unheralded 20-1 prospect who lost to Berridge by KO in 2011 and has won 13 straight since.

94.



JAMIE MCDONNELL

The Rundown:
Division: Bantamweight ★ Record: 29-2-1 (13 KOs) ★ Last year: 55 ▼

The Reasons:
McDonnell has been favored on the scorecards in three of his past four outings: back-to-back decisions over Tomoki Kameda in 2015 that his opponent disputed and the absolute robbery he benefited from against Liborio Solis in November 2016. This is still a better position than seemed possible when McDonnell lost two in a row a decade ago, dropping a split decision to 10-12-3 Chris Edwards in late 2007 and then a narrow points loss to future titleholder Lee Haskins a few months later. McDonnell has rattled off 21 wins since then, outpointing two men who went on to win belts: Stuart Hall and Julio Ceja. McDonnell vacated the belt he won from Ceja. He's a legit contender, yet he needs a legit win in his next fight to stay that way.

The Future:
McDonnell-Solis II was scheduled for November 4.

95.

JUAN CARLOS PAYANO

The Rundown:
Division: Bantamweight/ junior featherweight ★ Record: 19-1 (9 KOs) ★ Last year: 77 ▼

The Reasons:
Payano is a former titleholder who has yet to win or lose a belt with any conclusiveness. His ascent came in 2014, when he got off to a quicker start than the surprisingly sluggish 118-pounder Anselmo Moreno, a longtime titleholder. They clashed heads in the second round, which caused a cut above the challenger's right eye that ultimately prevented him from continuing after six rounds. Payano took the belt by decision. He didn't fight again for 10 months, edging unbeaten contender Rau'shee Warren in a good scrap by split decision. Their rematch came another 10 months later. This time Warren won a majority decision. Payano deserves another shot at the belt but instead has been consigned to stay-busy bouts on Premier Boxing Champions shows. He looked good outworking Alexis Santiago in August, marking the first time since 2014 that Payano had more than one fight in a calendar year.

The Future:
Nothing was official.

96.

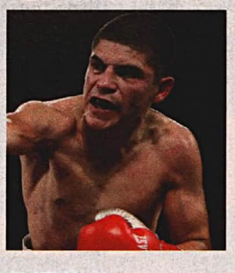
JOSH **TAYLOR**

The Rundown:
Division: Junior welterweight ★ Record: 10-0 (9 KOs) ★ Last year: unranked ▲

The Reasons:
Ohara Davies had the big mouth. Davies also had the big entrance, mimicking pro wrestler The Undertaker. But it was Taylor who had the big performance, embarrassing his fellow undefeated prospect with a stellar seventh-round technical knockout. Taylor outboxed Davies and landed early on, dropping him in the third and making him quit four rounds later. It was a better indicator of Taylor's talent than his other performances. After competing in the 2012 Olympics and winning gold in the 2014 Commonwealth Games, Taylor turned pro in 2015 and worked his way up the usual lower tiers of no-hopers and journeymen. He KO'd all but one, including many who tended to make it the distance in their losses. In his corner is Shane McGuigan, who had been the guiding force behind Carl Frampton until recently.

The Future:
Taylor was scheduled to fight November 11 against former lightweight titleholder Miguel Vazquez, whose boxing style could make for a tough night.

97.



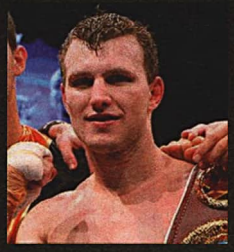
DIEGO **DE LA HOYA**

The Rundown:
Division: Junior featherweight ★ Record: 20-0 (9 KOs) ★ Last year: unranked ▲

The Reasons:
History is littered with fighters who cashed in on famous family members' names but failed to even approach their legacies. It'll be hard for Diego De La Hoya to match the accomplishments of his cousin Oscar, but he is a legit contender and not just another cash grab. De La Hoya had an extended amateur career, including a 1-1 record against Oscar Valdez. He turned pro in 2013 and quickly ended up in fights that showcased his development, beating opponents who had just lost to Leo Santa Cruz and Gary Russell Jr. De La Hoya stepped up again in 2016; he stopped fellow prospect Rocco Santomauro and won a wide decision over Luis Orlando Del Valle. His best performance yet came under a bright spotlight, when he outperformed undefeated former bantamweight titleholder Randy Caballero on the undercard of Canelo Alvarez vs. Gennady Golovkin.

The Future: The WBC wants a De La Hoya vs. Hugo Ruiz eliminator.

98.



JEFF **HORN**

The Rundown:
Division: Welterweight (WBO title) ★ Record: 17-0-1 (11 KOs) ★ Last year: unranked ▲

The Reasons:
Few gave Horn a chance to beat Manny Pacquiao. Few are giving him credit for doing just that. That's because most don't believe Horn deserved the unanimous decision. They also recognized that Manny Pacquiao appeared to be a shell of himself this past July in Australia, whether that's because he finally got old or just had an off night. Horn at least can be complimented on using his size well and taking it to Pacquiao like few had been able to. He's no bum. No one who gets up from a Randall Bailey knockdown, as Horn did in 2016, can be described that way. Horn went on to stop Bailey and scored TKOs over Rico Mueller and Ali Funeka before challenging Pacquiao for a world title.

The Future:
With Pacquiao forgoing an immediate rematch, Horn was considering potential opponents who are a better fit for his talent level. He finally reached a deal to face Gary Corcoran on November 11.

99.

RYAN **BURNETT**

The Rundown:
Division: Bantamweight (IBF title) ★ Record: 17-0 (9 KOs) ★ Last year: unranked ▲

The Reasons:
Sometimes a fighter is ready even if his record doesn't suggest that to be the case. Burnett had only faced opponents with a winning record in half of his 16 fights entering his title challenge against Lee Haskins. That didn't matter. Burnett excelled, knocking Haskins down twice en route to the weirdest of results: a wide split-decision victory. Two judges gave Burnett all but one round. The other gave Haskins a total of 10 rounds, though it soon emerged that the judge confused the fighters and filled in the wrong side of his scorecard. The result was changed to a unanimous decision in favor of Burnett.

The Future:
Burnett was scheduled to have a unification bout against Zhanat Zhakiyanov on October 21. Zhakiyanov is trained by Ricky Hatton, who used to be Burnett's trainer.

100.

JOSEPH **DIAZ JR.**

The Rundown:
Division: Featherweight ★ Record: 25-0 (13 KOs) ★ Last year: 99 ▼

The Reasons:
Diaz is in pretty much the same spot as last year but is one important victory from rising. The question is: Will it come? He has yet to demonstrate that he is special enough to challenge the top featherweights – guys like Leo Santa Cruz and Gary Russell Jr. Granted, you don't necessarily need to be special to get somewhere in boxing and, of course, fighters improve. We'll see. Diaz has decision victories over Rene Alvarado, Jayson Velez and Horacio Garcia in recent years – all good wins against capable guys who've lost to recognizable names. He stopped Andrew Cancio last year, gave Manuel Avila his first loss this past May and won a wide one on the cards over Rafael Rivera underneath Canelo Alvarez vs. Gennady Golovkin. Rivera was a late replacement for Jorge Lara, also a rising prospect.

The Future:
We'll see, but Lara or someone on that level needs to be next. Diaz is mandatory to Russell's title.

CANELO VS. GGG: 10 THINGS WE LEARNED

CANELO ALVAREZ AND **GENNADY GOLOVKIN** PROVIDED ANSWERS IN THEIR FIRST MEETING THAT WE CAN APPLY TO THE INEVITABLE REMATCH

By **Tom Gray**

The long-awaited matchup between Gennady Golovkin (this page) and Canelo Alvarez produced some surprises; being a good fight wasn't among them.

We waited two years for the Canelo Alvarez and Gennady Golovkin cocktail to be mixed on the Las Vegas Strip. We had 12 rounds of it, a great night and, when the scorecards were announced, one almighty hangover.

The split-decision draw at the T-Mobile Arena left us unfulfilled. What's more, it was fight fans who were required to pick up the tab, because a rematch of the biggest middleweight championship fight in years is now a formality.

In terms of action, nobody complained. Canelo-GGG became the explosive, all-action showdown that we anticipated. Golovkin cut down the distance and unloaded his formidable arsenal. Canelo utilized slick skills to produce some highlight-reel sharpshooting.

But what else do we now know? There were so many questions to be answered before the opening bell and everyone had an opinion. What fistic analytics can we extract from Part One that will give us a clue as to what we can expect in Part Two?

Here are 10 things we learned on the night of September 16:

1. WEIGHT IS NOT A FACTOR

Golovkin will win because he's the natural middleweight. How many times did we hear that?

Canelo made his professional debut at 15 years old and weighed 139 pounds. By the time he was 21, the Mexican boxer-puncher was a full-fledged junior middleweight who struggled to make weight. The consensus is that Canelo could have been fighting at a full 160 pounds

Golovkin's aggression was as advertised – and Canelo felt it.

long before he made the move permanent. His performance against Golovkin, regardless of how you scored the fight, backs up that claim.

"We now know that Canelo is a genuine middleweight," said Jamie Moore, current trainer for two-weight world titleholder Carl Frampton. "People often referred to Canelo as one-paced, but I felt that was down to him struggling to make weight. That will affect your engine. Against Golovkin, we seen him finish stronger than he ever would have at junior middleweight. He's going to be a different animal at 160."

Moore is a former British, Commonwealth and European champion who toggled between junior middleweight and middleweight himself. He speaks from experience.

Buddy McGirt is a former two-time titleholder, as well as an acclaimed coach, and he still can't understand what the fuss was about. "To me, weight was never a factor," said McGirt, who competed between junior welterweight and middleweight. "If you're a real soldier, you don't stress over four or five pounds."

2. CANELO CAN TAKE GOLOVKIN'S BEST SHOT

Along with being the naturally bigger man, Golovkin (37-0-1, 33 knockouts) is also regaled as an authentic knockout puncher. The Kazakhstani had only been the distance once is his previous 24 fights and that was in his most recent outing, against Daniel Jacobs.

Many experts wondered whether Canelo would succumb to bombs from a middleweight power-puncher because he had never faced one. However, the younger man was never hurt or down; his durability at 160 pounds is therefore beyond reproach.

"There was a video on social media showing Canelo landing a big right hand and Golovkin shook if off, but I was more surprised at how well Canelo took a shot," Moore said. "Golovkin's renowned for his punching power and I expected a reaction. The way Canelo absorbed Golovkin's best shots was a shock."

Former two-weight titleholder Paulie Malignaggi agrees that Canelo showed quality resilience, but he also noticed a difference when the punishment intensified.

"When you see shots landing and nobody's going down, you need to look at a fighter's reaction," said Malignaggi. "I thought Golovkin had the advantage there. When Golovkin landed shots, Canelo was able to stay conscious and alert, but he wasn't keen to throw back at those moments. His instinct was to be defensive, and he wasn't as keen to throw as Golovkin was."

3. GOLOVKIN CAN MATCH CANELO TACTICALLY

Over the last two years, Canelo has shown real improvement in terms of his technique, defensive prowess and intelligence. That was perhaps most evident in a November 2015 victory over Puerto Rican legend Miguel Cotto, whom Canelo defeated soundly by a 12-round unanimous decision.

But could the Mexican star maintain tactical superiority over Golovkin?

The early rounds of the fight were relatively even before Golovkin seemed to solve Canelo's style. He pumped out an effective jab, pounded Canelo against the ropes on occasion, and his punch variation was excellent. The younger man avoided serious damage, but he appeared to be a step behind for most of the middle sessions.

"I always felt Golovkin was the better technical fighter," said Malignaggi. "He has the amateur pedigree, he won a silver medal at the Olympics (Athens 2004) and he had hundreds of amateur fights. Golovkin's got a solid fundamental base. For me, Canelo has a talent advantage and he's a bit more athletic. He can punch from different angles and move his feet well."

The fact that Golovkin fights coming forward might have lured some fans into underestimating his boxing ability and tactical awareness.

That's how Moore saw it: "To be an effective pressure-fighter, cut the ring off and maneuver fighters into position, you have to have a good technical brain. I don't think Golovkin is given enough credit for that."

4. CANELO IS THE SUPERIOR DEFENSIVE FIGHTER

Boxing is a dangerous game, but when Golovkin's bombs are going off all around you, it's a lot more dangerous. If you can't get out of the way of GGG's state-of-the-art artillery, then you will not last 12 rounds.

In the fight, Canelo had to be defensively superb and he was. He bent at the waist, slipped right hands that were potential fight-enders and avoided Golovkin's big left hook. Canelo took his fair share of punches – it was a fierce fight – but the younger man avoided scores of shots that would have had him looking up at the arc lights.

"Canelo's anticipation of the shots was superb," said Moore. "His technique and reaction speed was bang on. But you can't just react to those shots and get away from them all the time. That little shoulder roll and pulling away from the left hook, that's obviously been drilled into him in training, and it worked a treat. I think Golovkin was surprised at how difficult it was to pin Canelo down."

McGirt agrees: "Canelo is great

JOHN LOCHER

Canelo didn't just survive, as some expected; he launched attacks on his own terms.

defensively and his trainer has done a very good job with him. He's got all the tools and he's proven himself. The only thing is, he got a bit too comfortable in the fight. He needs to stay focused from Round 1 to Round 12."

The one punch with which Canelo could not come to grips was Golovkin's terrific jab. It landed throughout.

5. GOLOVKIN IS THE SUPERIOR OFFENSIVE FIGHTER

You don't say!

Golovkin is the best offensive fighter in boxing. GGG has the same ability to create panic without throwing a punch that Julio Cesar Chavez and Roberto Duran had at their best. The majority of opponents struggle to implement a game plan because they are so concerned about self-preservation. One mistake and the fight could be over.

Jacobs found a way to neutralize Golovkin and avoid a violent fate, but he fought the fight of his life to do it. The "Miracle Man" lived up to his nickname by surviving the bone-breaking assaults and used lateral movement, switch-hitting and counterpunching to frustrate Golovkin over the distance.

However, according to Malignaggi, Golovkin wasn't as effective at closing the gap on Canelo as he had been against other opponents. That was the result of what was coming back.

"Golovkin wasn't cutting off the ring completely when Canelo moved left because he didn't want to go towards the left hook," said Malignaggi. "That meant that Golovkin was always leaving an escape route to the left. So even though Golovkin was applying pressure, mentally and physically, Canelo could remain calm.

"Most Golovkin opponents end up with nowhere to go. Canelo, despite making some mistakes, always had an escape route because Golovkin was cognizant of being caught by a big left hook."

6. CANELO HAS IMPROVED SIGNIFICANTLY

When Canelo faced off against Floyd Mayweather in September 2013, he had an assortment of advantages.

The Mexican idol was bigger, stronger, fresher, more active and a harder hitter. However, Mayweather's area of excellence is ring intelligence, and that was bolstered by a massive edge in experience. Canelo could barely touch him. He was hypnotized and picked off over 12 rounds en route to his first and only professional defeat.

"The Mayweather loss made him a better fighter and Canelo has improved in every area," said McGirt. "He can box. He can punch. He can put them all together. If he loses his punching power during a fight, he can still out-box you. Or if he's being out-boxed, there's always the possibility that he can find a way to hurt you and get your respect."

Since the Mayweather setback, Canelo's record is 7-0-1 (4 KOs). Of the eight fighters he has faced, six of them previously held or were holding world titles, and all of them presented different style confrontations.

"Canelo has been involved in so many fights at the top level that you can't help but improve from that," said Moore, who tipped Canelo to defeat Golovkin. "There's only so many things that a coach can teach you, but you can't beat experience. If you had a list of what you would want a top fighter to experience, in terms of development, Canelo has ticked almost every box."

7. GOLOVKIN IS NOT IN SIGNIFICANT DECLINE

When Golovkin failed to dominate Jacobs as he had his previous opponents, the reaction wasn't surprising.

Golovkin was suddenly not as good as advertised. Jacobs had exposed him as a one-dimensional fighter. Golovkin was on borrowed time. The monster man was mortal. How dare Golovkin allow a world class opponent, who was significantly larger on fight night, to go the distance?

So did the critics have a point?

"No, certain fighters just bring out the best in you," said McGirt. "Golovkin underestimated Jacobs a little, whereas Canelo brought out the best in him. He knew he was in for a long night against Canelo. When he fought Jacobs, there was no urgency. When he fought Canelo, Golovkin fought like someone had robbed his house."

Malignaggi agrees. He believes Golovkin has several more years left at the top. "He's fought the two best opponents of his career back-to-back, and people need to keep that in mind," he said. "A fighter like Golovkin relies on solid fundamentals rather than athletic ability, so he can last a long time in this game. That's why Bernard Hopkins could last longer than Roy Jones Jr. We might see some decline over the next few years, but he'll be very tough to beat nonetheless. Golovkin could still be on top in his 40s."

8. CANELO COULD BECOME A MEXICAN GREAT

Mexico has produced so many great world champions.

The country is a boxing hotbed renowned for battle-hardened warriors who fear no one. Ruben Olivares, Salvador Sanchez, Julio Cesar Chavez, Marco Antonio Barrera, Erik Morales, the Marquez brothers ... and the list goes on.

Off his recent performance against Golovkin, does Canelo have what it takes to join his countrymen?

"I think he's well on his way," said Malignaggi. "I don't believe a loss prevents you from being ranked as a great fighter. If Meldrick Taylor hadn't been robbed of victory against Chavez when the fight was stopped with two seconds left, Chavez would have lost. We would still look back at Chavez as a great fighter, regardless."

Malignaggi had Golovkin a runaway winner on September 16. He scored the bout 117-111, or nine rounds to three. Others thought the fight was close. Moore scored it 115-113, seven rounds to five, in favor of Golovkin but still believes that Canelo turned in an exceptional performance.

"Canelo absolutely has the potential to be a Mexican great," said the trainer. "He's ticked all the boxes, he has the experience and they can let him off the leash now. I don't think he can move through any more weights – he doesn't have the height – but he can carry on at middleweight and be involved in huge fights that will define his legacy."

Most felt Golovkin came out on top against Canelo, but no one doubts the appetite for a rematch.

9. GOLOVKIN IS A GREAT MIDDLEWEIGHT CHAMPION

Golovkin has reigned supreme for years. He has unified three of four sanctioning body titles. His 23-fight knockout streak is a division record. He has been legitimately feared by many of his contemporaries. And he has now been named as this publication's No. 1 fighter pound-for-pound.

Still, the panel was split on GGG's greatness.

"I don't think he's a great like a Marvin Hagler, or a (Sugar Ray) Robinson, or a (Bernard) Hopkins, or a James Toney," said McGirt, who seemed aghast at the suggestion. "Those guys were great and for anybody to put today's guys in that league, there's something wrong with them."

Malignaggi, who once trained under the tutelage of McGirt, broke things down differently.

"Golovkin will always have trouble with athletic guys," said the acclaimed Showtime Boxing analyst. "However, look at Hagler. He wasn't the most athletic guy; he relied on breaking you. Can you imagine a fight between Golovkin and Hagler? You can mention Golovkin alongside any middleweight in history, and you can mention him favorably."

Moore echoed those words. "A couple of years ago I would have put Golovkin in there with any middleweight in history and I would have given him at least a shot of getting the victory," he said. "Would he have beat Hagler or Monzon? I'm not sure, but he would have given them a fight, that's for sure."

10. THIS IS STILL THE BEST FIGHT MONEY CAN BUY

Canelo and GGG are still the middleweights of the moment. In time, fans will be crying out for

matchups with alternate fighters at 160 pounds, but right now a sequel is top priority. The first fight was terrific, and who wouldn't want to see that again?

The official result was a draw, which is unsatisfactory in more ways than one. Consensus says that Golovkin won a close, competitive fight and was unfortunate that he didn't have his hand raised.

Inside the arena, Canelo, who was essentially the home fighter, was booed following the verdict – an apparent comment on the scorecards.

McGirt and Moore said they would tip the Mexican star to win a rematch. Malignaggi favors Golovkin. They agree on one thing: There is as much, if not more intrigue surrounding a second fight than the first.

"I don't think there's another middleweight fight out there that tops this one," said Moore. "Neither one of them should be thinking about fighting anyone else, because they have a score to settle. They've just fought a great fight; we waited long enough for it and the result was a draw. We need a second fight to prove who the better man is."

We waited more than two years for the original. Hopefully the return is only a few months away. RING

Tom Gray is the U.K. Correspondent/Editor for RingTV.com and a member of the RING ratings panel. Follow him on Twitter: @Tom_Gray_Boxing

AT RINGTV.COM

Thomas Hauser was in Canelo Alvarez's dressing room before his clash with Gennady Golovkin on September 16 in Las Vegas. Here is Hauser's two-part series.

Part I: bit.do/canelo-series

Part II: bit.do/canelo-series-II

REPORT CARD

THE MAIN EVENT
A-

The fighters threw – and landed – big bombs throughout the fight, giving the fans a compelling scrap. The only things missing: Neither was hurt or down.

ALVAREZ
B+

Canelo had a lot of doubters, many of whom wondered whether he would be overwhelmed by a bigger foe of this caliber. He wasn't. He held his own.

GOLOVKIN
B+

Golovkin took the fight to Canelo from beginning to end and had success, proving that he's as good as he has been billed his entire career.

EDDY REYNOSO
Canelo's trainer

B+

Reynoso earned his money late in the fight, when he sensed urgency and advised Canelo to close big. His did, which secured a draw.

ABEL SANCHEZ
Golovkin's trainer

B+

Sanchez was steady and cerebral throughout. Golovkin started slowly but, at the behest of his coach, built up a full head of steam in the middle rounds.

THE JUDGES
C

Dave Moretti (115-113 for GGG) and Don Trella (114-114) turned in reasonable cards. Adalaide Byrd's (118-110 for Canelo) was a disgrace. At least the result was acceptable.

KENNY BAYLESS
The referee

A

There was a referee? Bayless was barely noticeable, meaning he let the fighters fight. That's usually a good thing.

THE ATMOSPHERE
A

The crowd never lost its enthusiasm, even without particularly dramatic moments. And they made it clear how they felt about the decision.

THE UNDERCARD
C-

Diego De La Hoya was impressive in his victory over Randy Caballero but, overall, the undercard lacked compelling action.

- Michael Rosenthal and Tom Gray

Andre Ward adopted this pose 32 times in his 32 pro fights.

VELVET HAMMER

SOME APPRECIATED **ANDRE WARD**, SOME DIDN'T, BUT EVERYONE AGREES HE WAS ONE THING: A WINNER

By **Ron Borges**

Andre Ward has always seemed to understand who and what he was, even if much of the boxing world did not. He was never going to be the bloodied hero in battle if he could avoid it, which he usually could. Nor was he going to become the widely recognized sporting hero he should have been, because the emotional price of that in these bombastic days was higher than he was willing to pay. Instead, he was going to be to the end what he was from the start: He was going to be a winner.

If that was not enough to capture the public's attention, so be it. If much of the world failed to see what he was or understand who he was, he could live with it because, in his mind, the aim was to leave the ring with your hand raised. That is what he accomplished every time he stepped between the ropes, from the age of 13 until his shocking decision to retire from boxing on September 21 at the

age of 33.

"I've never been the best, but I've always worked the hardest," Ward once told me. "It takes something to do something."

Indeed it does. It takes something to win an Olympic gold medal when your name is not among the brightest lights on the marquee. It takes something to go 32-0 as a professional with only 16 knockouts, because to do it that way you must do it without possessing The Great Equalizer – the thing Don King once called "double shock power!" You have to do it with lightning, which Ward had in abundance, but without the thunder that can right many wrongs inside the ring.

Lastly, it takes something to win world titles at 168 pounds by beating every one of the best super middleweights in the world and then move up to the light heavyweight division and step in against a man who was known as "Krusher" for a reason. Sergey Kovalev carried that name because he had long done what Ward could not. He knocked people out. But he didn't knock out Andre Ward.

Kovalev knocked him down in the second round of their first meeting, but unlike the rest of the men Kovalev put on the canvas, Andre Ward got up with the same resolve that made him unbeatable until the day he walked away from the sport. He got up looking for a way to win, and Kovalev had hell to pay for it. That is who Andre Ward really was. A winner.

Ward was once asked if he understood that not everyone was a fan of his defense-first style, even though it never let him down. Without a hint of defensiveness Ward replied, "I would say that's a very accurate assessment. I know they want blood, they want me knocked down and staggered. I've studied this sport for many years and if you look at old footage of Roy Jones, Bernard Hopkins and old interviews and footage of Floyd Mayweather, it's the same kind of things that were said about them, and those three guys are legends and Hall of Famers.

"In this day and age, the public is sold that if it isn't a knock-down, drag-out fight and one guy's ear isn't hanging off, then it wasn't worth your time or money, and I don't think that's fair to the fighters or fair to the fans.

"Hardcore fans know who they like and know what kind of style they like and they're going to tune in and buy tickets, but I feel that turns the casual fan off when they're not being educated on what they're looking at or they're reading things that are always ripping one type of style and one type of fighter."

That style, Ward was making clear, was his, which is to say a boxer's style. Willie Pep may have been as good a pure boxer from a technical standpoint as ever put on gloves, even inspiring the legend that he once won a round without throwing a punch. CompuBox devotees would be appalled by Pep but avoidance, if properly executed, is a large part of the sport if you're looking for sport and not a barroom brawl.

Dedicated both in his professional and personal life, Ward married his high school sweetheart, Tiffany.

But Ward and Pep understood boxing is not all about avoidance either. It is about the art of war as described by Sun Tzu, the ancient Chinese military strategist whose treatise remains warfare's foundational manual. Whether Ward ever read it or not, he certainly understood its essence, which is you fight when the terms favor you and retreat when they do not.

"It's one thing if a guy doesn't throw or look like he wants to be in the ring, but if a guy has a particular style where he has nuances and sometimes he fights, sometimes he boxes, whatever the case may be, I feel the general public should be educated on what they're looking at," Ward explained that day. "But you can't be worried about that because you understand that some people get

it and some people won't. You have to do what you have to do. Some people won't like it, but some people will."

In the case of Ward many didn't, but that's partly because many fans today had little understanding of what he was doing. It is why he never was a big draw, either live or on pay-per-view. Many would rather watch a sign painter work than an artist.

So perhaps it was fitting that Ward left the game without fanfare, posting an announcement on his website rather than calling a press conference or making a post-fight pronouncement wrought with emotion. He went out the way he fought. Quietly on his own terms.

"To the sport of boxing – I love you," Ward wrote. "You've been by my side since I was 10 years old. You've taught me so much. You've humbled me. You've promoted me. I've sacrificed a lot for you, but you've given me more than I ever thought possible. You gave me a platform, made me a champion and helped me provide for my family. I am forever grateful to you. ... As I walk away from the sport of boxing today, I leave at the top of your glorious mountain, which was always my vision and my dream. I did it. We did it. ... I want to be clear – I am leaving because my body can no longer put up with the rigors of the sport and therefore my desire to fight is no longer there. If I cannot give my family, my team, and the fans everything that I have, then I should no longer be fighting. Above all, I give God the glory, for allowing me to do what I've done, for as long as I have."

Despite an unblemished record and having emerged as both the winner of Showtime's Super Six World Boxing Classic tournament to crown a unified 168-pound champion and later the unified light heavyweight title, Ward was seen about as frequently as Sasquatch the last few years. That is not how one raises one's profile or sells one's product, but that's how it went.

When he first met Kovalev in 2016 it was the first time in nearly five years Ward boxed more than once in a year. Since easily outpointing WBC super middleweight champion Carl Froch 5½ years earlier, he'd fought only five times and his last two opponents prior to Kovalev were little more than sparring partners.

Those absences resulted both from injury and a string of contractual battles with his longtime promoter, Dan Goossen. Ward basically tried to sit out their contract at the end, a contract twice ruled legally valid by the California State Athletic Commission and a judge.

After Goossen's passing, Ward finally bought his way out and signed with rapper Jay Z's Roc Nation, who remained his promoter the final three years of his career. But in part because of those long absences, he remained little known outside of boxing's cognoscenti and thus an underappreciated enigma.

This was best illustrated by a stunning fact: After 7½ years as a world champion, Ward didn't appear in Las Vegas until the final two fights of his career and never fought at Madison Square Garden.

"I've definitely tried to make it happen," Ward said prior to his first appearance in Vegas, where he won a hotly disputed decision from Kovalev, 114-113 across the board, despite getting floored in that second round. "Being close to Vegas, in theory I feel it should have happened. I always wanted to fight in New York City at Madison Square Garden or at the Barclays Center, but it just didn't happen for one reason or another.

"You just got to trust the guy with the plan (that would be God, not Ward). It's not always going to be what you want it to be or would like it to be, but I can't argue with the way the table is set right now. I'm just excited about seizing this moment."

In a sense, he did by defeating Kovalev in consecutive fights, but those artistic successes did not translate into box office success. Ward-Kovalev I was held at Vegas' T-Mobile Arena, which seats 20,000. The fight drew barely half that (10,066) and

WARD'S TOP FIVE

A look at the five most important victories of Andre Ward's career.

SERGEY KOVALEV II

Date / site: June 17, 2017 / Las Vegas • **Result:** TKO 8 • **The particulars:** Ward won their first fight but the decision was disputed. The rematch also was controversial – the result of last-second low blows – but more conclusive, as Ward hurt his rival with a big right and then followed with a barrage that ended the fight.

SERGEY KOVALEV I

Date / site: November 19, 2016 / Las Vegas • **Result:** UD 12 • **The particulars:** Ward was fortunate to emerge with his perfect record intact, as many believe Kovalev deserved the victory. He made a statement, though, rallying in the late rounds to climb back into the fight and demonstrate that he was still an elite fighter.

CHAD DAWSON

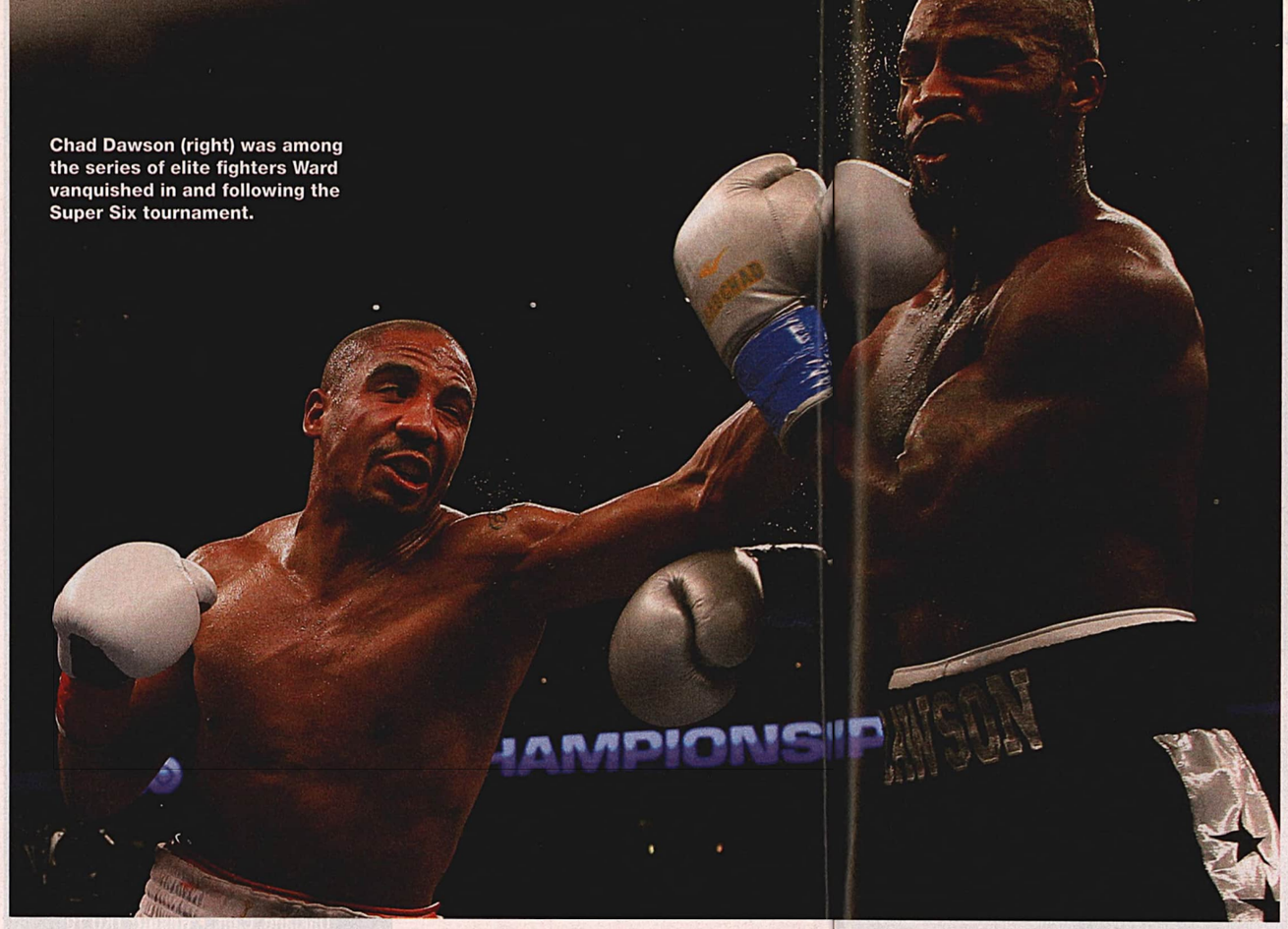
Date / site: September 8, 2012 / Oakland, Calif. • **Result:** TKO 10 • **The particulars:** Dawson was coming off a victory over Bernard Hopkins and still a force in boxing when he dropped from 175 pounds to 168 to face Ward. The weight loss and choice of foe were ill-advised, as Ward broke down and then stopped Dawson.

CARL FROCH

Date / site: December 17, 2011 / Atlantic City • **Result:** UD 12 • **The particulars:** Ward proved an earlier victory over Mikkel Kessler was no fluke, baffling the tough, resourceful Englishman with his unusual skills to win easily. Ignore the official cards, two of which were close: No one else did to Froch what Ward did to him.

MIKKEL KESSLER

Date / site: November 21, 2009 / Oakland, Calif. • **Result:** TD 11 • **The particulars:** Ward entered the Super Six World Boxing Classic and this fight – against one of the tournament favorites – as a largely untested, distinct underdog. The result – a onesided decision in a cut-shortened battle – opened a lot of eyes.



Chad Dawson (right) was among the series of elite fighters Ward vanquished in and following the Super Six tournament.

garnered a disappointing 165,000 pay-per-view customers.

Because of the controversial decision and the clear feeling these were the two best light heavyweights in the world, an immediate rematch was widely anticipated yet was staged in the 12,000-seat Mandalay Bay Events Center and sold only 6,366 tickets, according to the Nevada State Athletic Commission. Pay-per-view sales were equally disappointing, doing only a reported 135,000.

Ward received the highest payday of his career for the rematch, an estimated $6.5 million, but soon after it was announced his multi-fight deal with HBO was over, and there appeared to be little network interest in renewing at numbers Ward would accept. Not long after, he retired.

Refusing paydays while paying lawyers to engage in fights they couldn't win was the opposite of his style inside the ring. There he engaged only when the odds were in his favor. Otherwise he frustrated opponents with slick defense, seldom making himself an available target.

His business decisions were at odds with that approach and an odd way to try getting to New York or Vegas, but Ward always walked his own path. Inside the ring it always worked. Outside, not so well. Yet no one can argue with his record.

"I approach every situation the same way," he once explained. "I wouldn't be able to get to this level and stay at this level if I checked in and checked out. It's the same dedication and it's the same work. At the end of the day, to be a champion you have to be able to beat whatever's in front of you."

Ward did that against the likes of Mikkel Kessler, Arthur Abraham, Chad Dawson, Froch and Kovalev. In a couple of those fights he was the underdog, yet he won because he knew what they did not. He knew some underdogs have teeth too.

"At the end of the day many people make the same mistake with me," Ward said. "They call me a great boxer or a great neutralizer, but there's so much more going on with me than that. If I was just about defense and neutralizing, then a lot of these big punchers would just try to walk through me, and there's a reason they don't. That's what fight night is all about. It's not about talking about it to try to prove your case; it's about the opportunity to be great.

"It's not about making unnecessary moves. It's about making the necessary moves when you need to make them. It's about rising to the occasion and being in the moment. We specialize in that."

Indeed he did. Throughout his career, dating back to the 2004 Olympics in Athens, where he became the last male American boxer to win a gold medal, Andre Ward specialized in winning. If you didn't like how he went about it, sorry. The aim was not to please. It was to win.

When the Super Six tournament began, Kessler and Froch were heavily favored. Ward was an American afterthought, a barely known former Olympian who couldn't punch, critics said. Nice to have you, but you won't be here for long.

Yet after the final bout was decided, he'd beaten them both, whether fans appreciated the way he did it or not. To lose to such a fighter can leave opponents and fans frustrated and unclear about what just happened. Few fighters in history ever won so often yet left so many thinking next time would be different, even though it wouldn't be.

Immediately after Ward outpointed Froch in the Super Six final, Froch said, "I couldn't get anything going – and that is due to Andre Ward. I wanted to put shots together, but he ducks and he slips and he slides. I tried desperately to get shots off, but I never found myself in the zone. He was either too close, smothering me, or too far away. He's very good at keeping himself out of harm's way. I do think I could beat Andre Ward on a good night, but to beat him, I need to be working on lots of technical things."

One cannot receive much higher praise. And five years later Froch added to it, telling Sky Sports' website before the first Kovalev fight, "I think he will eventually get to that level where he is unbeaten and is pretty much unbeatable, so people will back the likes of Kovalev or (middleweight champion Gennady Golovkin, who never faced Ward) to hope Ward gets beaten, but I don't think he ever will be."

Yet in the very same interview, Froch added that losing to Andre Ward was a confusing experience fraught more with embarrassment than pain.

"On the outside, he generally has it all his own way and is fast behind the jab and boxes very well," Froch said. "He stays out of the way and doesn't get hit by a punch. The jab, the hook and that right he shoots to the body are so fast and accurate.

"When he's in trouble and it's hard for him, though, he stays in close, hits, holds and uses his head, nullifying the opponent. I did think up close that I could out-strength him because he's not a big puncher, but he knows what goes on up close and that makes him such a good fighter. He can adapt and change to each fight.

"Around the fifth or sixth round, I sat down and just said to my trainer: 'I can't hit him!' I couldn't get near him. It was so frustrating, and when the 12th-round bell went I just sort of held my hands out to say I've lost the fight. I knew I'd lost but I didn't think I'd even had a fight. ... He didn't really hit me, I didn't hit him and I lost 115-113 on two of the cards, but people were saying I was outclassed."

That may be the best explanation of the frustration of fighting Ward. You lose and know it and yet, as Froch put it, "I didn't think I'd even had a fight."

That was the magic and mystery of Andre Ward. He beat you with a velvet hammer, not a sledgehammer. Though displeasing to many customers, the result was the same. Just check the record book.

Those skills began developing when, at 9 years old, his father brought him to a boxing gym in Oakland, California. He was trained there for most of his career by his godfather, Virgil Hunter, and last lost when he was 13.

For the next 20 years, he would never see another man's hand raised over him in the ring. Whether he was a favorite or an underdog. Whether an afterthought or the main event. Always he won. So if you didn't like his style, perhaps you're the one missing the point?

In the end, he would retire 32-0 as a professional and 115-5 as an amateur, a record he built facing down the best super middleweights of his time and the best light heavyweight of his two-year tenure in that division. Perhaps he could have done some things differently, but he could not have done more.

Fighters like Sergey Kovalev enter the ring with an ominous aura about them that comes with a knockout percentage like his – 84 percent the night he first met Ward. Two fights later, it was down to 79 percent and he was no longer undefeated. He remains baffled why.

Ward understood it is the concussive blows that please the crowd and if you don't deliver them, your skills may remain underappreciated. But it was a trade he was willing to make to win. Although he retired among the best pound-for-pound fighters in the world, he never created the kind of buzz – literally or figuratively – of someone like Kovalev, yet he understood he possessed skills that were just as lethal.

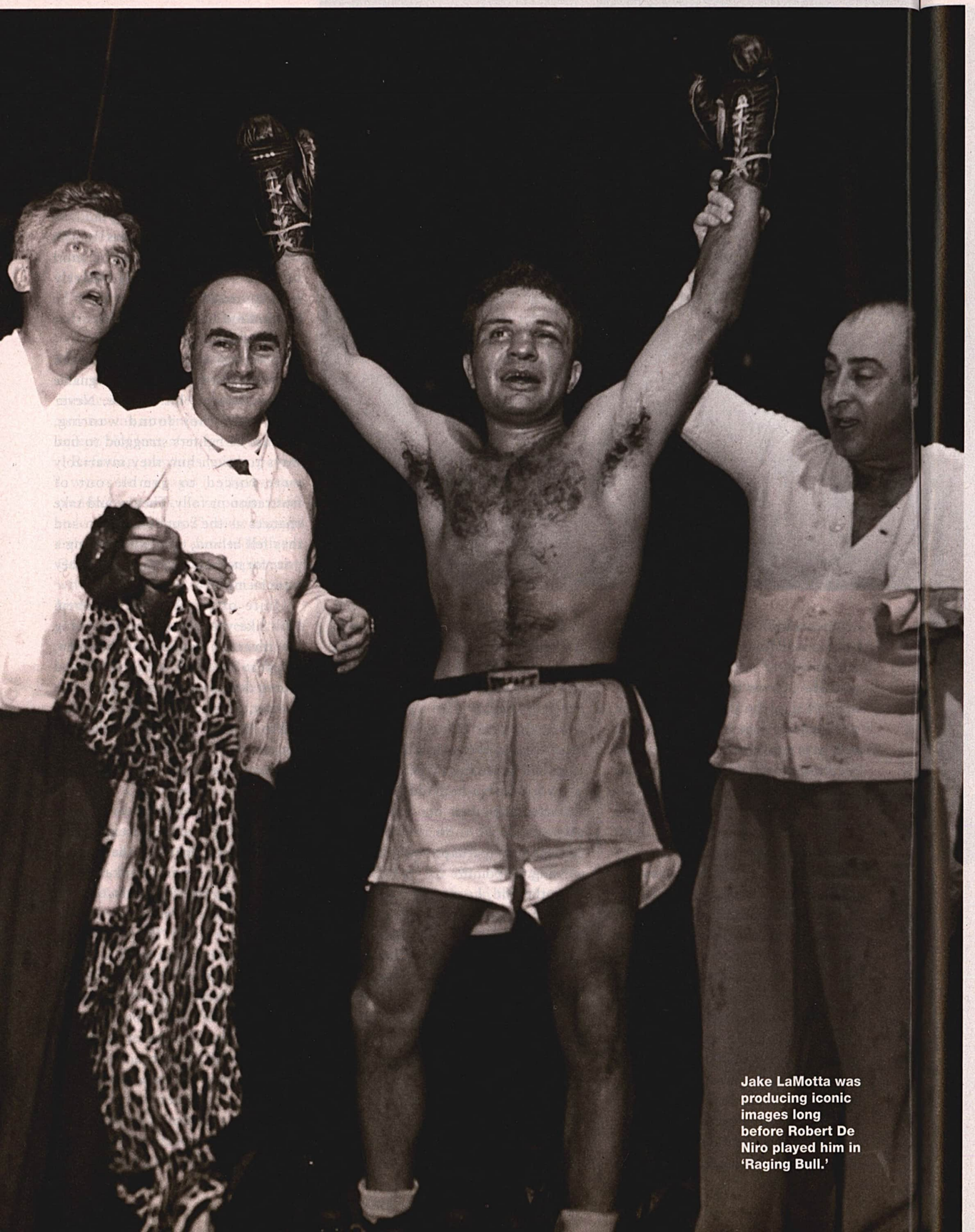
Speed, agility, ring generalship, an accurate jab and a nearly impregnable defense became his offense. Never once were they found wanting, because as fighters struggled to find ways to reach him they invariably were forced to gamble out of frustration or folly. They would take chances as the rounds wore on and they fell behind, eventually paying a price for not understanding what they were facing.

Quite often, Ward made them look like yo-yos on a string, going wherever he wanted to take them, except to the floor. Such skill allowed him to defeat top quality fighters like Kessler, Froch, Abraham, Kovalev, Sakio Bika and Edison Miranda convincingly but not concussively. None expected the kind of problems they faced.

"Sometimes the naked eye can't see what's going on," Ward explained. "They believe what's on the surface. Then they get hit and think, 'Damn, he hits harder than I thought.' It's like the Floyd Experience.

"At the end of the day, what separates good fighters from great fighters and great fighters from HBO fighters is how they perform when the lights come on. I been on the canvas. I been buzzed. I been cut. I've had flight or fight moments and haven't tapped out one time. I know who I am as a fighter."

So does the record book. Andre Ward was an unbeatable fighter. So what more do you want? RING



Jake LaMotta was producing iconic images long before Robert De Niro played him in 'Raging Bull.'

A LIFE IN MANY ACTS

JAKE LAMOTTA WAS THE BULLY DEPICTED IN 'RAGING BULL' BUT ALSO SO MUCH MORE

By **Don Stradley**

"Smile. If you can't be thankful for what you've received, be thankful for what you've escaped." – Jake LaMotta

A stone-chinned middleweight from the Bronx, an ex-reform school kid imbued with dark glamour, now dead at 95, Jake LaMotta was the prototypical fighter of his era: tough as a street dog, yet not immune to the mob's headlock on the boxing business, a character fit for the movies. No reputation can quite survive a film like "Raging Bull," and ever since its release in December of 1980 the accepted image of LaMotta has been shaped by the sight of Robert De Niro, gaining for the role a well-publicized 60 pounds, beating up Cathy Moriarty and winning an Academy Award in the process. Thus LaMotta became one of the few fighters of the 1940s who modern fans might know about, a guarantee that his death on September 19 sent people rushing not to YouTube to check out his old fights, but to their DVD collections to watch a movie described by Roger Ebert as "an Othello for our times."

One examines LaMotta's life expecting the usual bullet points: the violent upbringing during the Great Depression years, the rivalry with Sugar Ray Robinson, the slide into self-destruction and the unlikely rebirth as a dinner theater raconteur. We end up with a new appreciation of LaMotta, partly because four generations of boxing writers downplayed his intelligence and catered to the public's need for a bullying villain. His fighting style alone deserves a reassessment. Angelo Dundee, who worked with him briefly, once said that LaMotta was less like a bull and more "like a cat. Jake was smart, not just a brawler." We imagine LaMotta rumbling forward like a tank, taking punches, as he once said, "like I didn't deserve to live," but this converted southpaw was not without subtleties. He had a quick left and had mastered the art of playing possum before lashing out with a sucker punch. Brittle hands were his problem, as was the fact that he was a natural light heavyweight who starved himself to campaign in the more lucrative middleweight class. When managers steered their middleweights away from LaMotta, he was matched against welterweights who ran from him and light heavyweights who pounded on him.

Then there was his charisma. Old photographs of LaMotta with Vikki, the long-suffering wife depicted in "Raging Bull," had a doomed, romantic quality – flashbulbs exploding in the underpass of one seedy arena or another, the beautiful blonde planting a smooch on her husband's battered, oversized head. They were a celebrity couple before the term was invented. De Niro and Moriarty couldn't touch Jake and Vikki in terms of sheer Truman-era swank.

In "Raging Bull: My Story," the book De Niro gave to director Martin Scorsese with the hope of making a film, LaMotta mentioned that his life felt like, "an old black and white movie. ... Why it should be black and white, I don't know. But it is ... and almost all of it happens at night, as if I lived my whole life at night." Fittingly, when we think of LaMotta now we think of a black and white movie. Still, many have wondered if De Niro's volcanic portrayal was a bit overdone.

"I have to say the movie was accurate," said former welterweight champion Tony DeMarco. "I saw Jake lose his temper a few times. He'd be very calm, and then it was as if a trigger was pulled inside him. You didn't want to be around when Jake got mad." DeMarco witnessed one of LaMotta's brutal moods in a Miami gym when he laid into an unsuspecting sparring partner. "For no reason that I could understand, Jake started swearing and hitting this poor guy all over the ring. Jake cremated him. But that was Jake."

A key part of the LaMotta mythology, an incident not mentioned in the movie, was that he'd once mugged a neighborhood bookie with a lead pipe and later read the man's obituary in the newspaper; he spent many guilty years believing he'd killed the guy. Shockingly, the supposedly dead man attended a post-fight

celebration the night LaMotta won the middleweight championship. The death notice, LaMotta learned, had been a mistake. The man didn't even remember that Jake had attacked him. LaMotta noted in his autobiography, "the moment I discovered I was not really a murderer, I also stopped being a killer in the ring. Something had gone out of me."

He still had a couple of grand nights left, like the one in 1950 when, on the verge of losing the title to Laurent Dauthuille, he scored a knockout with only 13 seconds left in the 15th round. LaMotta had been right, though – he was fading. He started losing more often than he won, and was even knocked down by Danny Nardico, the first time LaMotta hit the canvas in more than 100 fights. LaMotta's final record was 83-19-4 (30 knockouts), but LaMotta's isn't a story told by cold stats. It took a movie to do that.

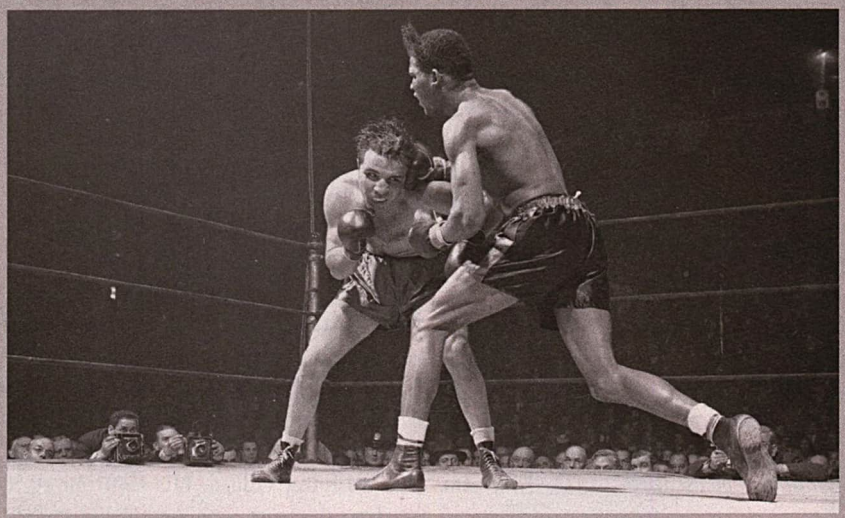
When United Artists sent him out to promote the film, LaMotta dazzled the press. He'd been living in a small East Side apartment and working as a bouncer-greeter at a topless joint on 7th Avenue, so the success of "Raging Bull" was important to him. He cracked jokes, told stories about sparring with De Niro and mentioned inaccuracies in the screenplay. "Like when they say I hit my wives," he said. "I really didn't. Because if I hit 'em, they won't wake up."

As "Raging Bull" pulled LaMotta's name out of the ether, a vocal minority of sportswriters and former fighters alike objected to the attention he was receiving. They'd never forgiven him for throwing a 1947 fight with "Blackjack" Billy Fox, a favor done for the gangsters who controlled boxing in those days, and only because he was promised a shot at the middleweight champion, Marcel Cerdan. LaMotta later testified before a U.S. Senate subcommittee that was investigating the influence of organized crime on boxing. However, admitting his part in a rigged bout turned him into the

THE ROBINSON-LAMOTTA WARS

"I would have to say Robinson was the best I fought," LaMotta once said, describing his six-fight rival as "a cutie, fast, with all the tricks, but he could also take a punch and he could throw one." Of LaMotta, Robinson said, "This guy, you hit him with everything, and he'd just act like you were crazy. … I have never met a fighter as strong as he is."

The record books show Robinson leading the series 5-1, but as you'll see in our look back, those numbers don't reflect the closeness of the bouts.



ROBINSON-LAMOTTA I

Date: October 2, 1942
Location: Madison Square Garden, New York
Result: Robinson W 10
Background: After cleaning out the welterweight division, Robinson took on a middleweight. LaMotta decked him in the first round, though Robinson went on to win on the scorecards. On a side note, LaMotta was only 20, Robinson 21.

ROBINSON-LAMOTTA II

Date: February 5, 1943
Location: Olympia Stadium, Detroit
Result: LaMotta W 10
Background: LaMotta, using his 15-pound weight advantage and a merciless body attack, knocked Robinson through the ropes in the eighth round and pummeled him for the remainder of the bout. It would be Robinson's only loss in his first 132 pro contests.

ROBINSON-LAMOTTA III

Date: February 26, 1943
Location: Olympia Stadium, Detroit
Result: Robinson W 10
Background: With the series tied, Robinson won the rubber match. As usual, LaMotta battled hard, knocking Robinson down in the seventh. LaMotta always felt he won this one, claiming the judges favored Robinson because he was going into the Army.

ROBINSON-LAMOTTA IV

Date: February 23, 1945
Location: Madison Square Garden, New York
Result: Robinson W 10
Background: Robinson prevailed again. "It was a fast fight most of the way," reported the UPI correspondent, "with Robinson backing away and jabbing LaMotta almost at will."

ROBINSON-LAMOTTA V

Date: September 26, 1945
Location: Comiskey Park, Chicago
Result: Robinson W 12
Background: LaMotta hurt Robinson repeatedly in this bout but came out with a split-decision loss. "The crowd booed the decision," stated the Associated Press. Robinson called this contest "the toughest fight I've ever had with LaMotta."

ROBINSON-LAMOTTA VI

Date: February 14, 1951
Location: Chicago Stadium, Chicago
Result: Robinson TKO 13
Background: Weakened by his efforts to make the 160-pound limit, LaMotta took a horrific beating but was still on his feet at the time of the stoppage. The bout became known as "The St. Valentine's Day Massacre."

LaMotta always dismissed the official verdicts and maintained the series was even at three apiece.

LaMotta was a familiar presence on the boxing scene.

fight game's bête noire.

LaMotta's confession inadvertently cast a shadow over all fighters of his era. Rather than praise LaMotta for coming clean, they hated him for revealing boxing's dirty secrets. "Everyone, all of a sudden, was acting like I had leprosy," LaMotta said. He was even denied an invitation to Ray Robinson's farewell gala at the old Garden. That hurt him.

But LaMotta, always ready for a long fight, hunkered down and outlasted his critics. He absorbed their insults the way he'd absorbed punches. In 1980, when the film inspired another round of attacks, he took their best shots and remained standing. He even started appearing on lists of great middleweights. Meanwhile, the movie mirrored LaMotta's tenacity. Not a major success at first, it was eventually hailed as a modern classic. Like LaMotta, the movie got its due.

"I look pretty bad in the picture," LaMotta said upon the movie's release. "But ... I can't be mad at Bobby De Niro and Marty Scorsese. I was a sick animal. I was jealous. I was vicious. They captured the real me." For old times' sake, LaMotta brought Vikki to the premiere. When it was over, he asked, "Was I really that bad?" She answered, "You were worse."

It's difficult to say if LaMotta would be remembered at all in recent decades if "Raging Bull" had not become a cultural touchstone. Without it, LaMotta may have meant no more to a contemporary fan than, say, Fritzie Zivic or Randy Turpin. If he's remembered as a kind of hybrid – LaMotta with De Niro's face – that's better than disappearing into the long-ago. De Niro, too, remains shackled to the movie; some feel he's never been as good since, as if playing LaMotta exacted a physical and mental toll that he never cared to repeat.

LaMotta was inducted into the International Boxing Hall of Fame in Canastota, New York, in 1990. By all accounts, he approached the long second act of his life with gentleness. When he died, his seventh and final wife, Denise Baker, described him as a "sweet, sensitive, strong, compelling man with a great sense of humor, with eyes that danced." Seeing LaMotta in the yearly Hall of Fame motorcade was like watching a small chunk of history go by, a flesh-and-blood link to boxing's notorious past. He'd wave with his left hand, the one that had once knocked Robinson out of a ring in Detroit; the one that had struck wives, bookies, prison guards and prison walls, and now seemed barely strong enough to grip a cigar. People lined up along the streets of Canastota to cheer him, to get a look at him. Whether they were honoring an old champion or an old movie didn't matter. He just kept waving.

Tony DeMarco's past and present are equally alive in his hometown.

THE FEAST OF ST. TONY

LOCAL ROYALTY **TONY DEMARCO** STILL PRESIDES OVER BOSTON'S NORTH END

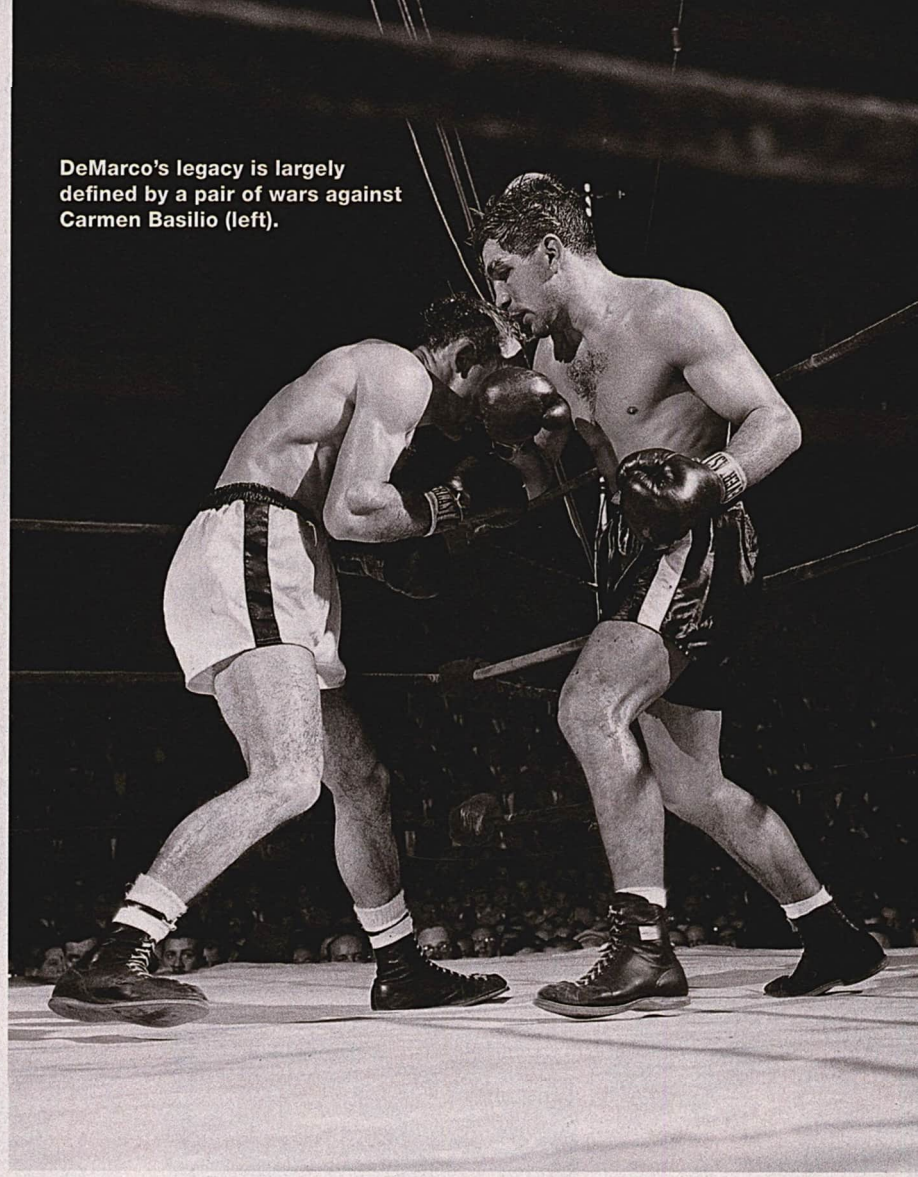
By **Springs Toledo**

April 1, 1955. "Don't worry," Tony DeMarco told his corner. "I'll get him." He tried, staging all-out attacks in the sixth, eighth, and ninth rounds, and almost got him in the 12th, but world welterweight champion Johnny Saxton was standing his ground and took the 13th.

The fight was held at the Boston Garden, which advertised "real action at all times" and where every seat was close enough "to see the sweat on the boxers' brow."

DeMarco, 23, was a real action hero who lived only a few blocks away in the North End, the Italian section of Boston. He walked to the Garden that night, passing under the shadow of St. Leonard's Church on Hanover Street, turning right onto Prince, left onto Thacher.

Fighters streamed out of that neighborhood during those years – corner kids who joined the Burroughs Newsboys Club, competed for a little taste of glory and wanted more. They were typical sons of immigrant peddlers and cobblers driven by the American dream and restrained by American prejudice. But they had boxing – a more popular choice, thankfully, than crime. The North End boosted Al Delmont, a bantamweight



DeMarco's legacy is largely defined by a pair of wars against Carmen Basilio (left).

at the turn of the 20th century, heavyweight Tony Shucco in the 1930s and the great Sammy Fuller. "None of them," regretted the Boston American, "ever marched back down Hanover Street with a crown on his head."

It was Fuller who built the latest contender into something more than a slugger, who gave him class. He was in DeMarco's corner that night of nights, peering through the ropes with his heart in his throat.

"He just *has* to win this fight! If he does, it will lift Boston boxing tremendously," a neighbor at ringside told a reporter. DeMarco was thinking the same thing. One minute into the 14th round, he threw a left hook that missed and then stuck his glove in Saxton's face, lining him up for a right hook that rattled the lights. The crowd erupted.

"C'mon Tony! He has a big chin!"

"Siddown!"

"Give 'em that right again!"

"Siddown!"

DeMarco's sisters were nervous wrecks at ringside. His father was home watching the clock. His mother had been praying all day; she walked from their second-floor flat at 13 Fleet Street to Sacred Heart in North Square and to St. Leonard's and spent hours in a pew. At 10, she was home in the window, her hands wrapped in rosary beads, eyes closed, lips moving. "Strangely," said the Evening American, she wasn't praying for her son to win, only that he – and Johnny Saxton – "would not be hurt."

But Saxton was already hurt; he got hurt the moment he signed with Blinky Palermo, the Philadelphia representative of underworld boxing czar Frankie Carbo. He owned Saxton, which meant Saxton wasn't managed so much as led along by the neck like a cash cow. It meant that despite his impressive amateur pedigree, obvious skills, and championship status, Saxton saw little of a $40,000 purse that was sliced up six ways to Tuesday.

Five months before meeting DeMarco in Boston, Saxton faced then-champion Kid Gavilan in Philadelphia. Carmen Basilio was rated first in the division and Saxton fifth but Basilio wouldn't do business and Saxton had no choice. Philadelphia was Palermo's turf, and a few friendly judges made it easy to swipe Gavilan's crown in front of 8,000 witnesses. Carbo himself reportedly traveled down from New York and was celebrating the larceny before it was even committed. Basilio was given the shoulder again when DeMarco, rated third, was signed to face Saxton. Carbo and Palermo figured DeMarco for "a soft touch" and in the end outsmarted themselves.

Two minutes into the 14th round, DeMarco knocked Saxton down. The champion got up somehow, but was wavering as if on a beach somewhere with piña coladas in both hands. DeMarco rushed over and landed more than 20 hooks one after another. Palermo was seen climbing into the ring hollering ("Stop it, for God's sake stop it!") as the Garden roared.

The referee raised DeMarco's hand and Fuller bolted through the ropes, threw his arms around the new champion, his champion, and kissed him. DeMarco's all-out attack not only ended Saxton's reign, it broke the stranglehold the Combine had on the welterweight championship of the world.

DeMarco waved to the crowd and headed to the dressing room. The press was kept outside the door as he went off by himself. A friend found him in a stall. He was sitting "with his elbows on his knees and his bandaged hands covering

his eyes, and he was sobbing uncontrollably."

He recovered as he always had and as he would have to again in the years to come. He was no stranger to tragedy. He lost his younger brother in 1951, his first-born son in 1985, and his youngest daughter in 1999. But on this night, he called his mother. "You come right home," she told him in Italian. "The street is full of people and the house is full of your friends. It isn't nice to keep them waiting." He hurried back to the North End and waded through a multitude of cheering familiars. He would name as many as he could for the newspapers, because they were his friends and his spotlight was theirs too. There was Stan Malvarosa, the florist; Joe Balungo, the tailor; Frank Freitas, the proprietor of the variety store; Red Scalafani, the TV repair man; Ed Tentoni, an accountant; George De Vino from the pastry shop; Mike Della Russo, the undertaker; Sylvio Iacapucci, who owned the grocery store. Billy Interrante hung a banner across Fleet Street that read "God Bless You Champ." Amplifiers blared music as if it were a feast day for a saint. DeMarco, wincing from back slaps, finally made it to his front door and "was swept into his mother's arms." Then he was in the window, a warm smile under two black eyes.

Tony DeMarco is 85 now, and his smile remains warm. He lives with wife Dottie next door to what is currently called – quite rightly if you think about it – the TD Garden. I met him for lunch at Ristorante Lucia in the North End and heard him before I saw him: a gentle, gravelly voice asking the hostess if "Strings Toledo" had arrived yet. I never correct him. He's earned the right to call me whatever he wants.

"How'd you get here?" I asked, hoping he didn't pay for a cab. "I walked," he said to my surprise. He told me he walks the half-mile to the neighborhood "about three times a week," retracing his steps from that night of nights back in 1955.

"If you have some time, I'd like you to meet my friends," he said after lunch – his pasta fazool, mine cacciatore. It was the first day of St. Anthony's Feast, and faces up and down Hanover Street lit up when he drew near. "So many are gone," he said as he glanced down Fleet Street at the empty lot that used to be home. So many are gone, and they keep going, though he replenishes their ranks with their children and grandchildren, and new friends. His hand is always open; he touched everyone who acknowledged him with a handshake or a grip of their arm. A bronze statue immortalizing his championship and his wars with Carmen Basilio stands three blocks south of Fleet Street, but he never mentioned it. "I go from corner to corner and say hello to people," he said.

We visited a barber shop, a real estate office, and two or three cafés. When DeMarco walked in, the barber stopped snipping, the realtor hung up the phone, and the café managers stopped mingling to greet him. At a family-owned pastry shop that opened the year DeMarco was born, Anthony Bova rushed behind the counter and made an offer of cannoli we couldn't refuse.

There's an Italian bookstore by North Square and DeMarco wanted to check the sales of his autobiography when he spotted a few guys leaning on a sedan double-parked in front of Limoncello. "The stout fella up ahead, I forgot his name." I didn't. It was Carmen "The Big Cheese" DiNunzio, the reputed acting boss of the New England Mafia, back on the street after a five-year bid for bribery. DeMarco was as gracious to him as he is to everyone else. DiNunzio reciprocated. "You sent me your book when I was in the can," he said. "Thank you."

Food vendors and games lined Thacher Street for the feast. Loudspeakers blared the soaring, romantic refrains of classic crooners. A group of older men loitered on chairs outside the "North End Golf Association" – none of them golfers, all of them ball-breakers. They got up and gathered around DeMarco. One tipped up his Panama hat and searched his iPhone. "Let me show you a picture of me and Tone," he said to Anthony "Biffo" Cappola. "I cherish it." Biffo stepped back with his palms up, "Please. No dirty pictures." Biffo fought as a featherweight under the name Frankie Waters in the 1940s. He's 90 years old, talks a mile a minute, and, he said as he quickly shifted into an old-school stance, "still at weight." The past is ever-present for them – they talked about Sammy Fuller ("he grew up on North Margin Street"), the New Garden Gym (now a parking lot on Friend Street), and the night DeMarco stopped Saxton. It's the present that's murky – "What's Mayberry doing fighting that wrestler?"

After four hours of countless introductions, I came to understand what Tony DeMarco's friends have understood since 1955: The neighborhood he cherishes is his kingdom, and it is something to be shared. He has no attachment to brick and mortar or bronze; it's the people he loves, and his heart is large enough to carry them all with him.

We walked down the narrow street toward Boston Garden, under the lengthening shadows of converted tenements. Behind us, the silvery voice of Jerry Vale serenaded the whole block.

The moment of moments
Grows nearer
My reason for living is clearer
So tell me the magic we're a part of
Is only the start of
A lifetime of love

Springs Toledo is the author of *Murderers' Row* (2017), *In the Cheap Seats* (2016), and *The Gods of War* (2014). Signed copies available at www.SpringsToledo.com.

Tony DeMarco (shown here after beating Vince Martinez in 1956) respected two of his past opponents in particular.

AP

TONY DEMARCO

58-12-1 (33 KOs)

Tony DeMarco's reign as welterweight champion was brief, but he earned the reputation of a rugged, strong battler who was eager to fight anyone in his 14-year pro career.

DeMarco, one of the oldest living former champions at 85, won the world 147-pound championship when he stopped Johnny Saxton in 1955 but might be best known for two brutal wars with Carmen Basilio, one of which was the RING Fight of the Year.

DeMarco, named Leonardo Liotta at birth, grew up in the Italian North End of Boston, where he discovered boxing at 12. He remembers weighing 95 pounds when he was 15 and training out of the Burroughs Newsboys Foundation club.

The boy demonstrated talent in unsanctioned youth competitions and wanted to become a full-fledged amateur. One problem, though: He was too young according to rules at the time.

"I was quite good," he said. "I think I lost one fight in maybe 40-something-odd fights as a young boy. Then I decided to be an amateur fighter. In 1947, in order to be an amateur fighter, you had

to be 18 years old, so I wasn't able to participate. What I did – a lot of people did the same thing – was borrow someone's name who was 18."

That name? Tony DeMarco.

"I borrowed Tony DeMarco's birth certificate and fought under Tony DeMarco when I was 15," he said. "When I got to be 18 ... I kept my friend's name."

As an amateur, he said, he had between 20 and 30 fights and lost only a couple. He turned pro at 16, initially fighting in and around Boston.

DeMarco's breakthrough victory came in 1953 when he edged future lightweight titleholder Paddy DeMarco (no relation) by a 10-round split decision. Then, early in 1955, DeMarco drew with reigning lightweight beltholder Jimmy Carter in a non-title welterweight bout.

That result led to a shot at the welterweight title a few months later. On April 1, he met Saxton at the Boston Garden.

DeMarco was ahead on two of the scorecards entering the 14th round, in which he dropped and hurt Saxton, forcing referee Mel Manning to end the contest. Leonardo Liotta was a world champion.

"It was a dream come true," he said. "Johnny Saxton beat a lot of fighters who were champions too. He was a great fighter."

DeMarco's reign lasted just two months, as he was knocked out twice by Basilio in classic wars the same year he won his title.

Basilio stopped DeMarco in the 12th of a scheduled 15 rounds on June 10 in Syracuse, New York, to win the title and then recorded the exact same result on November 30 in Boston. The latter fight was the 1955 RING Fight of the Year.

"I might have lost," DeMarco said, "but the second fight is considered the best fight of the century and the first was considered the second-best fight of the century."

DeMarco had mixed results in the subsequent years – never again fighting for a world title – and retired in 1962, when he was 30. His final record: 58-12-1 (33 knockouts).

More than a half-century later, DeMarco remains a popular figure in his North Boston neighborhood, where a street – Tony DeMarco Way – is named after him and a statue of him was erected in 2012. He also wrote an autobiography titled "Nardo: Memoirs of a Boxing Champion."

DeMarco lives in the West End of Boston with his wife, Dorothy.

He spoke to THE RING about the best he fought in 10 key categories.

FASTEST HANDS

Kid Gavilan: He had fast hands. He gained points but I gained enough to win. George Araujo from Providence, he was quite fast. I stopped him in five rounds but he was quite good.

BEST FOOTWORK

Gavilan: He had terrific footwork. When you were looking to aggressively attack him, he was able to move from side to side, in and out – and he was that fast.

BEST CHIN

Carmen Basilio: I hit Carmen Basilio with some good punches but unfortunately I didn't knock him out. I hit Basilio with good left hooks. I staggered him one time and his knees buckled and he went to the neutral corner. How he stood up, I don't know. His knees buckled down almost to the canvas and he managed to weather the storm.

STRONGEST

Basilio: He should have gone down. (Laughs.) ... He was very strong.

SMARTEST

Gavilan: I would say Kid Gavilan. He had that famous bolo punch and he utilized that quite well. You had to watch out for that. He was in and out as far as tactics were concerned. It was hard to find him with a punch. I remember getting in close trying to get him to the ropes, but in doing that he had his own tactics. He had the jabs and the ability to bounce off the ropes into a different direction. He was clever, a champion for a long time.

BEST JAB

Johnny Cesario: He was able to jab two or three times and move, and the next thing you know he's away. That's how fast he was. He had speed and a good jab.

BEST PUNCHER

Basilio: Virgil Akins was a terrific puncher and so was Carmen Basilio. I would say those two were exceptional. I would think Basilio was number one.

BEST DEFENSE

Gavilan: Kid Gavilan had a good defense. He was around for a long time. He knew his different tactics, he knew his tricks. He was a real polished fighter. I had to fight and score points. Fortunately I did.

BEST OVERALL SKILLS

Gavilan: Kid Gavilan. You've got to give him his respect. Johnny Cesario, give him some skills as a boxer. I'd say Kid Gavilan.

BEST OVERALL

Basilio: I've always said the best fighter I've faced was Basilio.

Questions and/or comments can be sent to Anson at elraincoat@live.co.uk and you can follow him on Twitter @AnsonWainwright

Anthony Joshua is on another level after his achievements in 2017.

NO-BRAINER

ANTHONY JOSHUA WAS THE CLEAR CHOICE FOR TOP YEAR-END HONORS IN THE U.K.

Little surprise that Anthony Joshua was named the "Boxer of the Year" at the British Boxing Board of Control's awards dinner in London in October. The IBF and WBA heavyweight champion was acclaimed by the governing body in the U.K. for his achievements in the 12 months from August 2016 onward, a period in which Joshua defended the IBF crown against Eric Molina and then gave his most accomplished – and exciting – performance in defeating Wladimir Klitschko in front of a huge audience at the national football stadium.

Others in contention for the award were Tony Bellew, George Groves, Terry Flanagan, Lee Selby and Kal Yafai. Joshua's coach, Robert McCracken, won "Trainer of the Year." The sage figure was also awarded the Dennie Mancini Trophy for services to boxing. The award for "Overseas Boxer of the Year" went to America's Errol Spence Jr., who in May defeated Kell Brook in 11 rounds to win the IBF welterweight title. Well deserved it was, too.

The great Larry Holmes, who was in the U.K. early in October, had some fascinating thoughts on Joshua when I spoke to him. Stay put and change nothing, says the former champion from that halcyon era of great American heavyweights.

"Joshua should stay in the U.K. and fight," said Holmes. "He's loved over there. I think he's a great fighter. I see some things where he makes mistakes, but he's still young enough to correct those things. He can be champion as long as I was – seven and a half years. He can beat that. He can break that record of Rocky Marciano. But I do think he should just fight everybody. Be a world champion."

Why is the Easton Assassin so impressed? "He can take a punch and he can punch. I didn't realize the guy was 6 foot 6. He can do all the

things a guy like me can do and he's 3 inches taller than me. He's got the arm reach and everything else. He can stay champion for a long time if he continues to keep his mind on the right track."

Holmes is looking forward to the day that Joshua steps in with Deontay Wilder, though.

"They could flip a coin," he said. "They could fight in America, anywhere ... All (Joshua's) got to do is be in shape. That's a good fight ... It's a hard fight but a good fight. But being champion is about manning up. You're champion, show that you're champion."

GGG SUPPORTS GUTKNECHT

Gennady Golovkin had 350 amateur fights and lost just five of them. One of those bouts was against Eduard Gutknecht, who is severely disabled and unable to talk after suffering a brain injury in his fight with British super middleweight George Groves in London last November.

While I was in Berlin to interview Kubrat Pulev at his training camp in early October, Uli Wegner, the Bulgarian's head coach, spoke of his sadness at Gutknecht's condition, but also revealed Golovkin's generosity.

"Eduard beat Gennady at a big tournament in Germany. I am very sad about his condition. Doctors say maybe in one or two years he will be better. He can't speak. He can look and move, but cannot speak. He has to learn to speak again."

Wegner explained that Golovkin has donated $25,000 and his gloves and robe from the superfight with Canelo Alvarez to raise funds for the German boxer. A very nice touch from a classy man.

REECE BELLOTTI

Many boxers have had second careers, some of them in the movie industry. Reece Bellotti was 17 when he decided to take up boxing. By then, he was already working with his father as a lighting technician on some of the biggest movie franchises out there: Harry Potter, Bond and "Mission Impossible." But boxing is what he loves.

"I only went down the local boxing gym because I enjoyed fitness and wanted to keep myself fit," explained the featherweight trained by Jim McDonnell, who looks after super middleweight titleholder James DeGale. "My trainer said, 'Look you've been here long enough, are you going to give it a go?' So I did, and I've never looked back since. I loved it. I love fighting and I love the training side of things."

Reece Bellotti is a man of action both in and out of the ring.

But it's very different from the movie world.

"When you first do it, it's a whole different environment that you don't get to see, behind the scenes," said Bellotti. "Obviously now I've been doing it for 10-plus years now, so you get used to it. I did the recent 'Mission Impossible,' I've done Bond – the recent one with scenes shot in London. You go to great places you wouldn't normally go to. But the number of takes are just mind-boggling."

Bellotti (11-0, 10 KOs) says he would never act, but as a physical character, he wouldn't mind doing stunt work.

"On the recent 'Mission Impossible' I was looking at some of the stunts, and you think, 'I'd love to do that.' If the opportunity came up, I would. It's all action, you're getting involved. Maybe next time on a 'Mission Impossible' job I'll take the place of Tom Cruise and do it myself."

DUKE MCKENZIE

Duke McKenzie is one of just three British boxers to win world titles in three weight divisions. Ricky Burns and Bob Fitzsimmons are the other two. Duke competed from 1982 to 1998, having held the IBF flyweight title from 1988 to 1989; the WBO bantamweight title from 1991 to 1992; and the WBO junior featherweight title from 1992 to 1993. He had 46 fights, 39 wins (20 KOs) and seven defeats.

The Londoner, who is an occasional guest on my "Fight Club" show on radio station TalkSPORT, has just been awarded a lifetime services to boxing bauble from the British Boxing Board of Control. Great boxer, and an even greater man, the 54-year-old continues to work with people in his community, is still in the gym morning, afternoon and evening, preaching the gospel of being fit in mind and body.

In my view, there should be a push for his induction into the International Boxing Hall of Fame in Canastota, New York.

In particular, Duke believes he "found his vocation" by running boxing classes for people fighting mental health problems.

"It's single-handedly the most important job I have done in my life, bar none," says McKenzie, awarded an MBE by Queen Elizabeth for services to boxing in 2011. "I don't want to manage boxers or train boxers. I like to train people with mental health problems. It is far more rewarding on a personal level for me, and that is where I have found my vocation.

"I have been so privileged and so blessed, because boxing has given me so much on so many different levels in my life. There is clearly a link between mental health and physical stimulation and well-being. As a former world champion, I have got a very strong mind and a very strong will, and I just try and pass on that experience to people who need some kind of guidance in their lives and to try and help educate people."

Here's my renewed call to honor Duke McKenzie as a Hall of Famer in boxing. RING

TOP 10

1. CARL FRAMPTON
2. ANTHONY JOSHUA
3. TONY BELLEW
4. JAMES DEGALE
5. LEE SELBY
6. TERRY FLANAGAN
7. GEORGE GROVES
8. KELL BROOK
9. KAL YAFAI
10. JAMIE MCDONNELL

11-15: Billy Joe Saunders, Ryan Burnett, Callum Smith, Scott Quigg, Tyson Fury.

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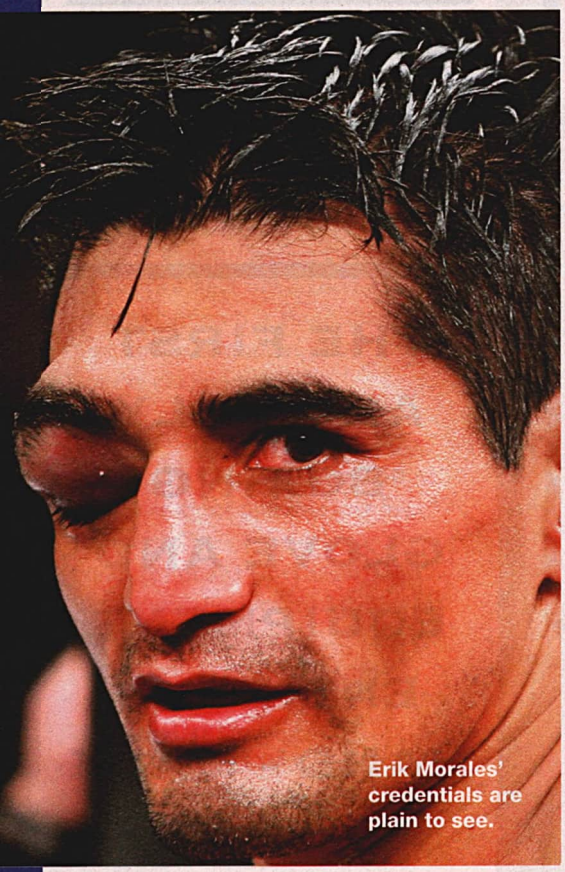
AP

EXCERPTS FROM THE RINGTV.COM EDITOR'S POPULAR COLUMN


Erik Morales' credentials are plain to see.

Since 2001, RingTV.com Editor Doug Fischer has held an ongoing dialog – which occasionally becomes heated debate – with boxing fans from around the world in "Dougie's Mailbag." The following excerpts are from the October 6 and 9 editions of the Friday and Monday mailbag.

JENSEN RUIZ, from Tampa, Florida, observed from Fischer's Instagram account that he recently received his International Boxing Hall of Fame ballot for the Class of 2018, and noted that there were several accomplished boxers to choose from. Knowing that Hall of Fame voters can only choose up to five candidates for the "Modern Boxer" category, Jensen says he would go with Vitali Klitschko, Erik Morales, Chris Eubank, Ivan Calderon and Israel Vazquez if he were able to vote. He asked if Fischer would share his thoughts on who he might end up voting for.

DOUGIE's reply: As you know, I posted on Instagram the five Hall of Fame candidates that I'm "leaning" toward picking, and my initial picks were very close to yours.

I went with the clearest first-ballot choice among new names, which is Erik Morales (and anyone who needs an explanation as to why is a lost cause), Nigel Benn and Chris Eubank (who I believe MUST be inducted together), former heavyweight champ Vitali Klitschko and longtime strawweight/junior flyweight boss Ivan Calderon.

Those were my immediate/off-the-top-of-my-head/no-research choices, and I'd be totally fine if they wound up being my final picks, but just one day after that Instagram post, I reconsidered Klitschko for another European standout, Dariusz Michalczewski (who, unlike Vitali, has been on the ballot for several years) and I replaced Calderon with former junior lightweight titleholder Rocky Lockridge (who's been on the ballot for as long as I can remember).

Somebody via Twitter reminded me that Michalczewski made 23 defenses of the WBO light heavyweight title, which in an era of four "world" belts and careful matchmaking isn't the be-all-end-all in terms of legacy, but the Germany-based Pole also scored a title-unifying (IBF/WBA/WBO) decision over Virgil Hill, who is now in the Hall of Fame, and he notched victories over the very solid likes of Graciano Rocchigiani (twice) and Montell Griffin. ("The Tiger" also won the WBO cruiserweight belt during a standout career that culminated with a snazzy record of 48 wins, just two losses and 38 knockouts.)

As for Lockridge, man, forget about it. This guy deserves so much more recognition and respect than he gets. He fought EVERYONE of note in the featherweight and junior lightweight divisions during the extremely competitive 1980s, beating the prime 130-pound version of Roger Mayweather (via first-round KO for the WBA belt) and former champ Cornelius Boza-Edwards, among other standouts. More importantly, to my personal Hall of Fame criteria, is that he gave THREE (great or arguably great) Latino legends all they could handle in world title bouts: Julio Cesar Chavez, Wilfredo Gomez (whom I believe he should have outpointed) and Eusebio Pedroza (twice). Lockridge was a globetrotter, often fighting in his opponents' backyards, and late in his career, he and Tony Lopez fought THE RING's Fight of the Year for 1988.

I know I'll be in the minority in putting a checkmark next to Lockridge's name, but I'm feeling pretty good about it, as I am about the other four candidates I'm voting for. Having said that, I've got close to a month to mull it over, so I might switch one or two out before mailing the ballot. There have been many borderline guys added to the ballot in recent years – such as Ricky Hatton and Winky Wright – some of whom are favorites of mine, like Julian Jackson, Fernando Vargas, Genaro Hernandez and Buddy McGirt.

DANNY, from London, says he is "perplexed" as to how Gennady Golovkin is now No. 1 in THE RING's Pound-for-Pound rankings "considering the opponents on his resume, the draw with a small, inexperienced middleweight and his lack of desire to test himself above his comfort zone of 160 (pounds)." Danny grants that Golovkin has looked impressive while "cleaning out" the middleweight division "with brutal power and a granite chin," but asks if one shouldn't have to do more to earn pound-for-pound king status. He adds that Canelo

boxed well against a naturally bigger middleweight and deserved the draw verdict against Golovkin, who he says hasn't accomplished as much as Manny Pacquiao, Floyd Mayweather Jr. and Andre Ward did to assume the No. 1 spot in the mythical rankings.

DOUGIE's reply: The pound-for-rankings do not have any set criteria, so it's always debatable – especially the choice for the No. 1 spot – and I think the arguments that the mythical ratings spark are a big part of its appeal to hardcore boxing fans.

Personally, I think Golovkin is worthy of the honor (which was recently bestowed upon him by THE RING and ESPN.com following Ward's retirement). However, The Boxing Writers Association of American recently came out with their own pound-for-pound rankings and announced that Terence Crawford is No. 1 among the world's elite boxers. I have no problem with Crawford (or even Vasyl Lomachenko) being considered the best boxer, pound for pound, on the planet. I know that Crawford and Lomachenko have looked way more dominant against their recent opposition than Golovkin looked against Canelo or Daniel Jacobs. I know that means a lot to many fans and members of the media.

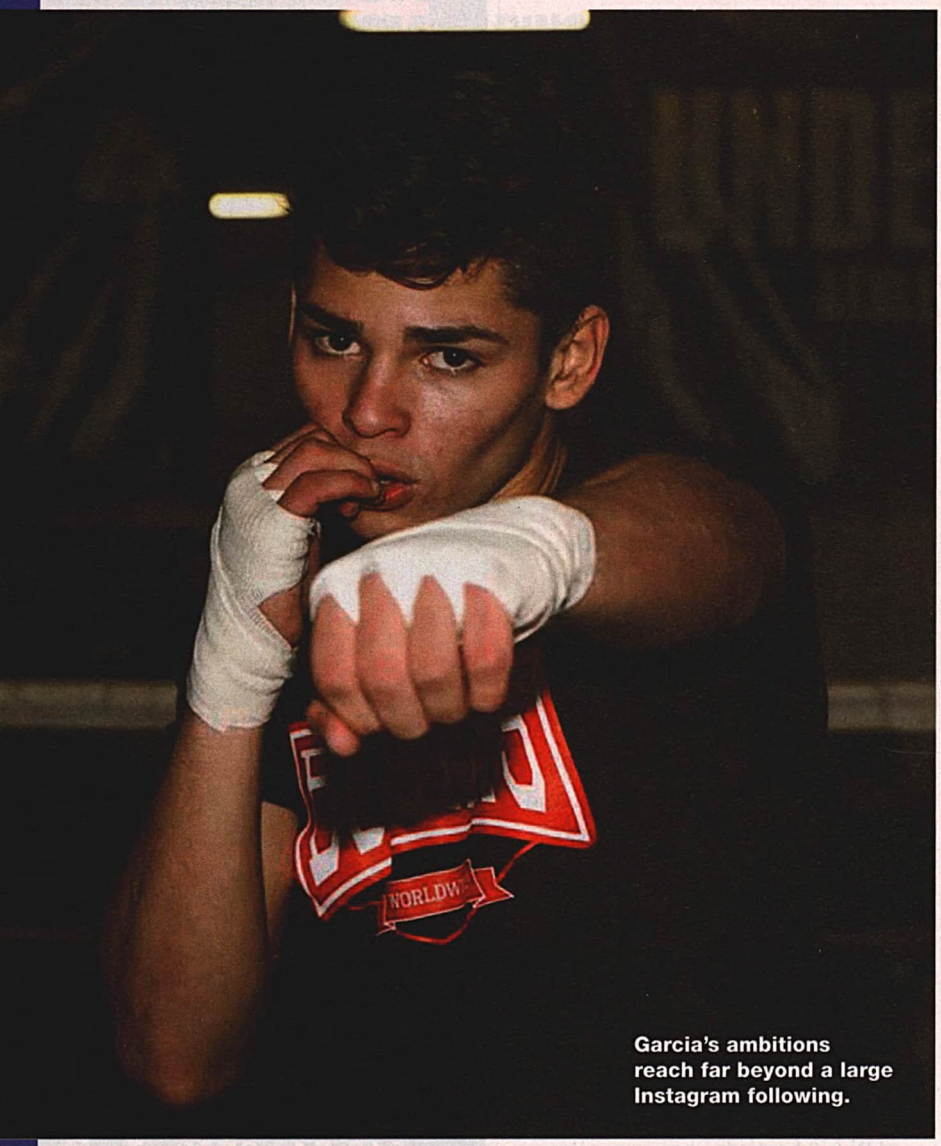
However, I'm one of those pundits that places a lot of emphasis on a fighter's quality of opposition when determining his or her rankings, be it divisional or pound-for-pound, and I think Alvarez and Jacobs are a lot better than the four or five best opponents on Crawford or Lomachenko's resume. I think Canelo and "DJ" are more experienced and more complete fighters than Nicholas Walters, Viktor Postol, Gary Russell Jr., Yuriorkis Gamboa, Julius Indongo, Ricky Burns, Jason Sosa, Ray Beltran and Miguel Marriaga. I think Orlando Salido is a complete fighter (and a hell of a warrior) and he has more experience than the two middleweight standouts, but they have superior talent and athleticism than the grizzled Mexican veteran.

Beyond who he's fought, Golovkin is one of the few active fighters to hold more than two major world titles and his middleweight championship reign is approaching seven years, which is the longest among active titleholders. He's also closing in on Bernard Hopkins' middleweight title defense record. These things count in my book. [Editor's note: THE RING didn't officially recognize Golovkin's WBA title until 2012.]

By the tone of your comments and your choice of words, it sounds like you view Golovkin as a big bully who wanted to pick on the "small, inexperienced" Alvarez. Let's be clear about Golovkin's intentions: He merely wants to be the undisputed middleweight champion. I'm not mad at him for wanting to unify all the titles in a division he has dominated. I think division-hopping is a little overrated (and often a clever way for some fighters to avoid challenges). And while Canelo had only fought above 155 pounds once before challenging GGG, he's hardly "inexperienced" (he had more than 180 more pro rounds under his belt than Golovkin did going into their anticipated showdown) and he's definitely not a pipsqueak – I'm fairly certain that he weighed more than Golovkin on fight night, and he's likely one of the strongest middleweights in the game.

Getting back to whether Golovkin is worthy of being pound-for-pound No. 1, you seem to think that the only method of attaining that lofty status is by competing in or winning world titles in multiple weight classes. I disagree, and I think history will back me up on this opinion.

Mike Tyson and Marvin Hagler were once at the top of THE RING's pound-for-pound list for cleaning out their divisions. Several elite boxers were once near the top of the pound-for-pound rankings based on their dominance in one division, including Evander Holyfield (heavyweight), Michael Nunn (160), Terry Norris (154), Mark Johnson (112), Ricardo Lopez (105), Floyd Mayweather Jr. (130) and Kostya Tszyu (140).



Garcia's ambitions reach far beyond a large Instagram following.

MAKINGS OF A STAR?

RYAN GARCIA HAS A LOT GOING FOR HIM. NOW HE JUST HAS TO WIN.

Ryan Garcia was in the fourth grade when the principal called his parents, Henry and Lisa, in for a meeting. "We need your son to stop shadowboxing at recess. It's riling all the kids up," the school official said.

Since he started training at age 7, Garcia has never stopped shadowboxing. Has never stopped watching every fight on television. Has never stopped dreaming.

He was ringside for Canelo-GGG in September, and he just knew these moments were meant for him.

"I know I'm going to be here soon because it's obvious to me. It's so clear," Garcia said after wrapping up a workout at Legendz Boxing Gym in Norwalk, California. "If I don't get here, I did something wrong. And I don't plan on doing anything wrong. I don't party. I don't do drugs. I don't drink."

The girls? Well, "that's a little different," he said with a laugh. "That won't slow me down no matter what, though."

And there are lots of them. His model looks already have made him a social media star.

He has upward of 167,000 Instagram followers. Teenage girls fawn over videos in which he smashes the heavy bag and they reply with heart emojis. His message request inbox is filled with girls trying to reach him for dates. Garcia only occasionally responds, although he did attend a homecoming dance to fulfill a fan's wish in October.

Garcia believes he can capitalize and draw female fans into boxing, much like his promoter, Oscar De La Hoya, did in the '90s.

But Garcia already had a female following before he signed with Golden Boy Promotions. Then "the guys started seeing me fight. Combine the guys with the girls, and it just went off like crazy."

Ryan's uncle, Sergio, was always looking for someone to train.

Ryan was playing Little League baseball at age 6 when his team finished in fourth place and all he received was a rinky-dink bobblehead. He was crestfallen. Garcia was ultracompetitive even then. He yearned for "something shinier."

That's when Sergio showed his nephew a picture of a championship belt. "How do I get that?" Ryan asked. "You gotta box," Sergio replied.

So they went to work in the family garage in Victorville, a small desert town on the road from Los Angeles to Las Vegas. Ryan still lives there with his father (who now trains him), his younger brother and his mother, who still accompanies Ryan to most

training sessions.

Even the sessions in which he has sparred with current titleholders like Leo Santa Cruz, Jorge Linares and Vasyl Lomachenko.

He's sparred six to eight rounds with each man and says he more than held his own.

"I'm not one of those guys who gets overwhelmed," Garcia said. "I caught (Lomachenko) with some good shots. He kind of took me lightly in the beginning. If he gets you on the back foot, you're done. I stood right there, so when he made the attack, I countered."

Ryan's confident – cocky, even – but it's not without backing. Many fighters will tell you they don't watch tape of other fighters. Garcia finds that attitude to be plain ol' dumb.

He devours boxing – either live or on some type of screen – every chance he gets, always seeking the fighters who possess command of distance and timing. And he loves to check out his upcoming opponents' fights.

"You don't have to train harder; you have to train smarter," said Garcia, whose favorite punches are his snapping jab and powerful left hook, which have combined to end all but one of his 11 fights inside two rounds. "You can see their tendencies. They can't change their tendencies. A lot of fighters just don't take it 100 percent. Boxing creates egos."

Garcia has an ego, sure, but the way he speaks about boxing – with such youthful zest – it's clear he's not about to let his opportunity pass following a 217-12 amateur career that included multiple national championships.

He also watches plenty of old fights so he knows "what history I can make so people will be like, 'Man, he did that before anyone.'" Garcia's ring gear for his November 2 fight – vintage short-shorts, leopard robe – is a nod to the past: It was patterned after the outfit worn by Jake LaMotta, who died at 95 in September.

THE ESSENTIALS
RYAN GARCIA

Age: 19

Weight class: Junior lightweight

Height: 5 feet 10 inches

Stance: Orthodox

Hometown: Victorville, California

Record: 11-0 (10 knockouts)

Biggest strengths: One-punch power ... Student of the game ... Accomplished amateur ... Devastating left hook ... Charisma and market potential to be a star.

Biggest question marks: How will his chin hold up when he faces a real opponent? ... What will happen when he faces adversity?

And when Garcia finally does make history, he wants it to mean something.

"Floyd Mayweather, he was the face of boxing for many years," Garcia said. "Had the biggest fights, the biggest platforms, the biggest audiences. What did he do with it? He didn't inspire people, he didn't give hope to people. What did he do? He chose to promote his strip clubs?

"Watch when I get a big fight; I'm going to stand for something that needs (attention). That's what I'm going to do. When I get up there and you see me before millions and millions of people, I will speak my piece."

If and when that happens, his mother's dreams – for him to be a "crossover boxer ... because it's rare" – will be realized.

Ryan Garcia seems to be rare, too. Good looking. Talented. Intelligent. A sense of both the past and future. All the ingredients are there. RING

3 MORE TO WATCH

MONEY POWELL IV
JUNIOR MIDDLEWEIGHT

Powell (4-0, 3 KOs) was the No. 1-ranked amateur in the United States at 152 pounds before signing with Richard Schaefer's Ringstar Sports. The 19-year-old boxer-puncher split his time growing up between the U.S. and his native Germany as part of a military family.

ANTONIO VARGAS
BANTAMWEIGHT

Vargas (4-0, 3 KOs) represented the U.S. at the 2016 Olympics, reaching the quarterfinals. The resident of Kissimmee, Florida, 123-7 as an amateur, signed with Top Rank and already has had four fights this year. He's of Puerto Rican and Mexican descent.

ANTHONY YARDE
LIGHT HEAVYWEIGHT

Within a mere 24 rounds of action, this talented power-puncher has won 13 straight fights with 12 knockouts. Highly-touted in U.K. fight circles, Yarde fights under the Frank Warren banner and the veteran promoter expects big things from the charismatic Londoner.

Jill Matthews (left) and Anissa Zamorron left it all in the ring for their three-fight rivalry.

FANTASTIC FIGHTS

THE FIVE GREATEST BRAWLS OF ALL TIME

When the topic of "best fights of all time" is broached, the debates on the men's side of the sport can go on for days, months, even years. Corrales-Castillo I. Ali-Frazier III. Gatti-Ward. See what I mean?

On the women's side of the sweet science, it's not that simple. When the sport was in its infancy, there was no YouTube to track down the best fights. And even in the modern era, the odds of finding the best bouts only increase if the match took place in Europe or in hotbeds like Mexico and Argentina.

Thankfully, with television and major promoters in the United States and England starting to ease back into the sport, not only do the fans get the opportunity to see top female talent, they're starting to see the best fights being made.

And maybe one day soon bouts will take place that will rival the five below as the best ever.

JELENA MRDJENOVICH TD 6 MELISSA HERNANDEZ

Date / site: May 31, 2013 / Edmonton, Canada

Background: You might say New York's Melissa Hernandez was pressing her luck in facing Jelena Mrdjenovich in Mrdjenovich's hometown of Edmonton for the third time. After all, Hernandez had already outpointed her rival twice in the same Shaw Conference Center. But when you fight Layla McCarter four times, as Hernandez has, fear isn't in your vocabulary. So off she went. The fight was destined to be truncated after a clash of heads left Mrdjenovich with a deep cut in the second round, meaning both fighters wanted to make a strong impression very quickly. They did, turning what might have been a tactical chess match into a back-alley brawl and an all-time classic.

The bout was halted because of the severity of the cut, with Mrdjenovich winning a unanimous decision: 58-55, 58-55 and 57-56.

HEATHER HARDY MD 10
SHELLY VINCENT
Date / site: August 21, 2016 / Brooklyn, New York
Background: Heather Hardy and Shelly Vincent had jawed at each other for years, promising a New York vs. New England battle that would rival anything the Yankees and Red Sox could put together. And while the wait was long for them to finally share a ring at the Ford Amphitheater, they delivered on every promise once the bell rang. Furious exchanges and seemingly endless wells of stamina on the part of both featherweights resulted in an extraordinary show. When it was all over and "The Heat" emerged with a majority-decision victory, they had to respect each other's courage and skill … and call for a rematch.

JILL MATTHEWS D 10
ANISSA ZAMARRON
Date / site: January 10, 1998 / Atlantic City
Background: Fight footage of the great Harry Greb has long been the standard of brutality for boxing fans. On the ladies' side, any of the three fights between Jill Matthews and Anissa Zamarron fit that bill. I missed their first bout in 1995 but was lucky enough to catch the next two in Atlantic City. Both were memorable, but their draw in January 1998 – featuring torrid exchanges for 10 unforgettable rounds – stands out most. If you weren't a fan of women's boxing after that fight, you just didn't like boxing. And no one was a better interview than Matthews, who later told me of her pre-fight intentions: "I'm gonna go out there, and I might not win, but I want to hurt her real bad. I swear. So she could show her belt to everyone in the fuckin' hospital. That was basically my goal. I didn't think it would go that far."

CHRISTY MARTIN UD 6
DEIRDRE GOGARTY
Date / site: March 16, 1996 / Las Vegas
Background: Christy Martin's victory over Deirdre Gogarty deserves a place here mainly because it was the fight that put Martin on the cover of Sports Illustrated and introduced the sport to a new audience, thanks to its placement on the Mike Tyson-Frank Bruno II undercard. But upon watching the fight again I was reminded of just how good it was in terms of action. Martin was a killer in those days, but the unheralded Gogarty bloodied her and gave as good as she got throughout, which produced a compelling battle. The scores were lopsided in Martin's favor, but this was no blowout. Far from it.

BRIDGETT RILEY KO 9
AICHA LAHSEN
Date / site: June 26, 1998 /
Background: Ah, Bridgett Riley. If she came along a couple decades later, she might have been a crossover superstar. As it stands, the all-action fighter with the nickname of "Babydoll" has to be introduced to the new generation through grainy YouTube clips. One of those clips is of her 1998 bout with Aicha Lahsen, a nationally televised matchup in which Riley was defending her IFBA bantamweight title. It was expected to be a showcase for the rising star. But then the unknown Lahsen put Riley on the deck in the opening round and nearly finished her. That set up a comeback for the ages. Riley slowly worked her way back into the fight until she lowered the boom on the challenger with a left hook that prompted referee Richard Steele to stop the fight and give Riley an indelible place in women's boxing lore. RING

FIGHTER OF THE MONTH

JESSICA CHAVEZ
UD 10 Esmeralda Moreno

One of the most underrated boxers on the ladies' scene, the WBC flyweight champion just keeps winning. Unbeaten in nine straight dating back to 2015, Chavez emerged victorious in her rubber match with Esmeralda Moreno on September 30, winning a near shutout 10-round decision over the 108-pound world champion, dropping her in the seventh round in the process.

POUND FOR POUND

1. **CECILIA BRAEKHUS**
Norway • 31-0 (8 KOs)
Welterweight
2. **DELFINE PERSOON**
Belgium • 38-1 (16 KOs)
Lightweight
3. **YESICA YOLANDA BOPP**
Argentina • 32-1 (13 KOs)
Junior flyweight
4. **JESSICA CHAVEZ**
Mexico • 30-4-3 (4 KOs)
Flyweight
5. **AMANDA SERRANO**
U.S. • 33-1-1 (25 KOs)
Featherweight
6. **JELENA MRDJENOVICH**
Canada • 37-10-2 (19 KOs)
Featherweight
7. **ERICA ANABELLA FARIAS**
Argentina • 24-2 (10 KOs)
Junior welterweight
8. **LAYLA MCCARTER**
U.S. • 39-13-5 (10 KOs)
Lightweight
9. **IBETH ZAMORA SILVA**
Mexico • 27-6 (12 KOs)
Junior flyweight
10. **ESMERALDA MORENO**
Mexico • 35-10-1 (11 KOs)
Junior flyweight

(Through fights of October 8)

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RINGSIDE REPORTS

BY NORM FRAUENHEIM

Wisaksil Wangek's elation was a stark contrast to Roman Gonzalez's downfall.

WISAKSIL WANGEK KO 4 ROMAN GONZALEZ

Date: Sept. 9
Site: StubHub Center, Carson, Calif.
Division: Junior bantamweight
Weights: Wangek 115 pounds, Gonzalez 114.8
RING ratings (before fight): Wangek No. 2; Gonzalez No. 3, No. 4 P4P
Network: HBO

Roman Gonzalez had plenty to prove. He still does. First, he had hoped to eliminate any doubt about whether he had been robbed on the scorecards in a March loss to Wisaksil Wangek.

And Gonzalez wanted to dispel doubts about whether the lightest fighter to ever be No. 1 in the pound-for-pound debate could reclaim the top spot.

It was a heavy burden. Crushing, as it turned out.

The rematch – a chance to set the record straight – ended in another loss, a knockout both stunning and sad. It only left Gonzalez with more questions and talk about what was next, about whether he should even answer another opening bell. He says he will.

For a future Hall of Famer as skilled as any in the history of the lighter weights, however, it'll be difficult for Gonzalez to stage a comeback that will take him all the way back to the pound-for-pound title. He climbed to No. 1 in September 2015, the first time a 112-pound fighter had done so on the RING's list.

His reign lasted for about a year and a half, ending when he moved up the scale, perhaps because he could no longer make the jockey-like weight.

There's a reason for weight classes, and that was never more evident than when he struggled but won his first 115-pound bout, a decision over Carlos Cuadras in September 2016.

A bigger Cuadras exposed vulnerabilities that a smaller opponent always has. Wangek capitalized on them. In getting a majority decision for a victory that many thought belonged to Gonzalez, Wangek learned that Gonzalez couldn't hurt him.

"I knew I was going to knock him out," said Wangek (44-4-1, 40 knockouts), a fighter from Thailand who remains mostly unknown even by his more common name, Srisaket Sor Rungvisai.

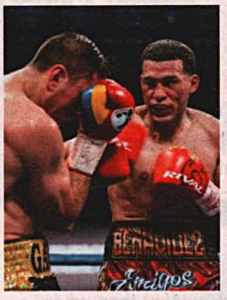
Whatever you call him, call him powerful. There was no confusion about that in the fourth round of the rematch, when Wangek knocked Gonzalez down twice, the second time with a right hand that ended the fight at 1:18.

It was a sudden end to a bout in which Gonzalez was a shell of the fighter with titles at four weights. It also was the second straight defeat since the Nicaraguan lost trainer Arnulfo Obando, who died in November 2016 after suffering a stroke.

Immediately after the concussive end, Gonzalez went to the emergency room for observation. Nobody was sure what he would do next. Then the WBA ranked him No. 2 at 115 pounds. With the ranking and his name, Gonzalez probably will get another shot at a title.

"I would be delighted to face English champion Khalid Yafai, but there is also a chance to fight with WBO champion Naoya Inoue," Gonzalez told El Nuevo, a Managua newspaper. "It could be in February. Make a fight." »

WORLDWIDE RESULTS— Go to: bit.ly/worldwide-results or scan the QR code to see weekly fight results at RingTV.com.



NO. 9 DAVID BENAVIDEZ SD 12 RONALD GAVRIL

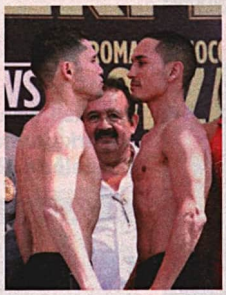
Sept. 8, Las Vegas (Showtime)

David Benavidez has a title belt and a lesson plan. From prospect to prodigy, it's been a quick trip. But at 20, there's still a lot to learn.

Benavidez got up from a 12th-round knockdown against Ronald Gavril to win a split decision that made him today's youngest titleholder at any weight. But the cards – 116-111 and 117-111 for Benavidez, 116-111 for Gavril (18-2, 14 KOs) – left questions about what was next for the 168-pounder.

A rematch looked likely, perhaps in January. More work in the gym looked like a necessity.

"It was a learning experience," said Benavidez (19-0, 17 KOs), a young man wise beyond his years and smart enough to know he's a lesson plan or two away from being ready for a shot at Gilberto Ramirez.



NO. 5 JUAN FRANCISCO ESTRADA UD 12 NO. 4 CARLOS CUADRAS

Sept. 9, Carson, Calif. (HBO)

It was a fight worth celebrating and everybody did – even the loser. Carlos Cuadras got to dance. But Juan Francisco Estrada got the victory, a 114-113 decision on all three cards.

After the final round, it was hard to pick a winner in a 115-pound fight that might lead to a shot at Wisaksil Wangek, who stopped Roman Gonzalez in the main event. It was easy to congratulate both fighters. In effect, ring announcer Michael Buffer did.

Buffer combined the fighters' names and announced "Carlos Estrada" as the winner. Cuadras (36-2-1, 27 KOs) heard "Carlos" and began to celebrate. Then Buffer clarified the result by announcing Estrada (36-2, 25 KOs) as the winner.

It was a mistake, yet somehow appropriate. Everybody deserved applause, even the judges, who for once were in agreement and accurate with a one-point edge for Estrada, who came back from a rocky start and earned the advantage with a left-right combo for a 10th-round knockdown.

NO. 1 OLEKSANDR USYK TKO 10 NO. 7 MARCO HUCK

Sept. 9, Berlin

It's an intimidating face – and it looks a lot like the future. Look at Oleksandr Usyk and look out.

Usyk, a poster boy for the World Boxing Super Series, got the tournament off to a powerful start in what was a glimpse at one of the game's rising stars. We say glimpse, because the bout wasn't televised live. But that's another story.

The story between the ropes was all about Usyk (13-0, 11 KOs), a cruiserweight beltholder who advanced to a semifinal bout against Mairis Briedis with a punishing stoppage of Marco Huck (40-5-1, 27 KOs).

Usyk, an Olympic gold medalist just like Ukrainian teammate and pound-for-pound contender Vasyl Lomachenko, toyed with Huck, a former titleholder who had few chances in the beginning and only facial bruises at the end of a bout stopped by referee Robert Byrd at 2:18 of the 10th round.

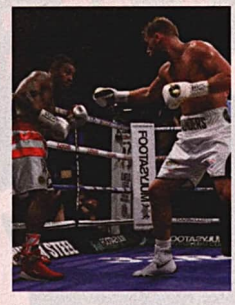
NO. 6 DIEGO DE LA HOYA UD 10 RANDY CABALLERO

Sept 16, Las Vegas (HBO PPV)

The checklist looks to be complete. The record is perfect. There's poise, patience and an array of punches. Add a one-sided victory over a former titleholder and Diego De La Hoya has a resume worthy of a title shot.

De La Hoya continued to show he has more than a famous name. Oscar De La Hoya's cousin looked like a serious challenger to Jessie Magdaleno or Rey Vargas with an assault that included quick feet and quicker hands in a one-sided dance that made Randy Caballero (24-1, 14 KOs) look awkward.

The scores were 98-92, 100-90 and 98-92 over the ex-bantamweight titleholder. If that hasn't dropped De La Hoya (20-0, 9 KOs) squarely into the middle of the junior featherweight mix, nothing will.



NO. 4 BILLY JOE SAUNDERS UD 12 WILLIE MONROE JR.

Sept 16, London (BoxNation)

The fight didn't live up to the weigh-in. Not much could have. Nevertheless, Billy Joe Saunders' son delivered the most noteworthy punch of the weekend.

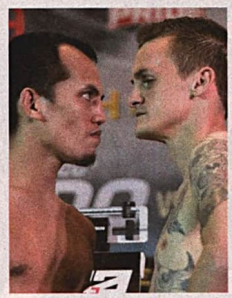
Eight-year-old Stevie Saunders received international attention for a punch that landed south of Monroe's beltline at the Friday weigh-in for a Saturday bout at Copper Box Arena.

It was the only memorable punch from a forgettable fight. There were suggestions dad should have been penalized a point for his son's low blow before the opening bell. But there's no rule about lousy parenting.

Turns out, dad didn't need the point anyway. Saunders (25-0, 12 KOs) retained his 160-pound title, scoring a 117-111, 115-114, 117-112 decision over a cautious Monroe (21-3, 6 KOs), who mostly stayed away from the U.K. middleweight.

After the bout, Stevie apologized.

"Sorry," he told Monroe. No word on whether Monroe stayed away from the son, too.



NO. 4 MILAN MELINDO SD 12 NO. 9 HEKKIE BUDLER

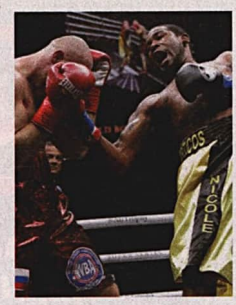
Sept. 16, Philippines (ABS-CBN)

Blood clouded Milan Melindo's sight but not the vision of achieving more in a promising career that seems to be blossoming.

Melindo, back in the Philippines for the first time since stopping Akira Yaegashi in Japan for a junior flyweight title, rallied in the final two rounds against Hekkie Budler to score a knockdown in the 12th.

"Blood is running in my eyes," said Melindo (37-2, 13 KOs). "He thinks I cannot see his punches."

But he could, just enough to land a counter that floored the popular South African and won Melindo the fight on split cards – 117-110, 115-112 in his favor and 115-113 for Budler (31-3, 10 KOs), whose corner called the scoring "a robbery."



NO. 10 YUNIER DORTICOS KO 2 NO. 9 DMITRY KUDRYASHOV

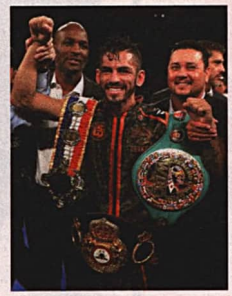
Sept. 23, San Antonio, Texas

A knockout was easy to predict in the World Boxing Super Series' first visit to the United States. Picking a winner, however, was a little tougher.

Cruiserweights Yunier Dorticos and Dmitry Kudryashov entered the ring with a combined 41 stoppages in 42 wins. In the end, however, it was the fighter with the-less-than-perfect KO-to-victory ratio who won by … yes … a knockout.

Kudryashov (21-2, 21 KOs) calls himself "The Russian Hammer." But he was never ready for a Cuban version of that moniker from Dorticos (22-0, 21 KOs), who delivered a beautiful left-right combo at 2:10 of the second.

"I said I was going to bring an earthquake and a hurricane and that's what I did," said Dorticos, who moves on to the semifinals against the Murat Gassiev-Krzysztof Wlodarczyk winner.



C JORGE LINARES SD 12 LUKE CAMPBELL

Sept. 23, Inglewood, Calif. (HBO)

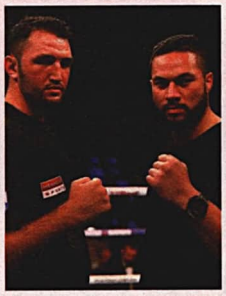
Staying busy sometimes leads to getting beat. Jorge Linares did the former and narrowly avoided the latter, moving closer to a looming lightweight showdown with Mikey Garcia.

Luke Campbell kept Linares busier than he might have anticipated. Without a second-round knockdown of Campbell, Linares (43-3, 27 KOs) might be planning for a rematch instead of Garcia. But the knockdown was enough: Two judges scored it for the Venezuelan, 115-112 and 114-113.

After the bout, Campbell told the BBC that his cancer-stricken dad, Bernard, died two weeks before the opening bell.

"I probably cried once a day," Campbell (17-2, 14 KOs) said. "I had to try and shut feelings off. After the fight I had a good cry."

All anyone knew during the bout was what Campbell, a 2012 Olympic gold medalist, did after the knockdown. He repeatedly scored, landing often enough for an edge on the third scorecard, 115-113.



NO. 5 JOSEPH PARKER MD 12 HUGHIE FURY

Sept. 23, Manchester, U.K. (YouTube PPV)

Joseph Parker was in the United Kingdom, campaigning for a shot at Anthony Joshua. But nobody was united about how Parker got into the running. There's only Fury.

This time it's Hughie Fury – Tyson's cousin – who lost after two judges scored the bout 118-110, the same card Adelaide Byrd turned in to ignite fury in the Canelo Alvarez-Gennady Golovkin draw.

Parker (24-0, 18 KO), a New Zealander with a heavyweight belt, won a majority decision with 114-114 from the dissenting official – scoring that had U.K. fans talking as if judges Terry O'Connor and John Madfis had been colluding with Byrd.

"Disgusting," said Fury promoter Mick Hennessy, who argued that Hughie Fury (20-1, 10 KOs) employed slick skills that dominated the bout.

But the more aggressive Parker argued that he won with effective aggression, a subjective category if there ever was one.

NO. 4 MAIRIS BRIEDIS UD 12 MIKE PEREZ

Sept. 30, Riga, Latvia (DirecTV's Audience Network)

Mairis Briedis remains unbeaten. But not unscathed. Mostly, he was just relieved to have another chance.

Briedis survived a messy first-round battle in the World Boxing Super Series, scoring a 116-110, 115-111, 114-112 decision over Mike Perez for a victory that puts him in the cruiserweight semifinals against Oleksandr Usyk.

"It wasn't easy, but we did it," said Briedis (23-0, 18 KOs), a beltholder who suffered a cut over his left eye from a headbutt. "… This was the first title defense in Latvia and the first time I was cut. I'm looking forward to my semifinal."

He also looked happy to be done with Perez (22-3-1, 14 KOs), a former heavyweight who was penalized in the third round for a butt and again in the 10th for a low blow.

"The referee was far from fair," said Perez, who went on to say he might retire.

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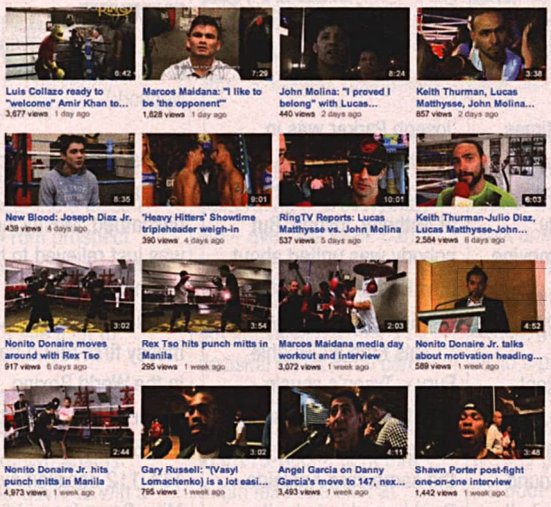

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COMING UP

Predictions are made by RING staff members Michael Rosenthal, Doug Fischer, Brian Harty and Mike Coppinger.

OCTOBER

ANTHONY JOSHUA VS. KUBRAT PULEV

Date: October 28
Location: Cardiff, Wales
Division: Heavyweights (for Joshua's IBF title)
RING Ratings: Joshua No. 1; Pulev No. 3
TV: Showtime
Watchability rating (up to five stars): ★★★★
Also fighting: Khalid Yafai vs. Sho Ishida, junior bantamweights (for Yafai's WBA title), Lenroy Thomas vs. David Allen, heavyweights, Frank Buglioni vs. Callum Johnson, light heavyweights, Anahi Esther Sanchez vs. Katie Taylor , lightweights (for Sanchez's WBA title).
Significance: Joshua (19-0, 19 KOs) isn't taking a gimme after his give-and-take brawl with Wladimir Klitschko in April. Pulev (25-1, 13 KOs) was manhandled by Klitschko, who stopped him in five rounds in 2014, but has rebounded with five consecutive victories. The 36-year-old Bulgarian is big (6 feet 4½ inches, around 250 pounds) and has skills, the product of a good amateur career. The problem is that Joshua is bigger, younger, fresher and punches much harder. Pulev has a monumental task ahead of him.
Predictions: Rosenthal – Joshua KO 7; Fischer – Joshua KO 7; Harty – Joshua KO 6; Coppinger – Joshua KO 5

OCTOBER 19 – Gabriel Rosado vs. Glen Tapia, middleweights, Las Vegas (ESPN2/ESPN Deportes). Also, Alejandro Barrera vs. KeAndre Gibson, welterweights.
OCTOBER 20 – Carlos Ruiz vs. Luis Miguel Montano, junior lightweights, Mexico City (Telemundo).
OCTOBER 21 – Jezreel Corrales (No. 3) vs. Alberto Machado, junior lightweights (for Corrales' WBA title), Verona, New York (HBO). Also, Demetrius Andrade (No. 4) vs. Alantez Fox, middleweights.
OCTOBER 21 – Murat Gassiev (No. 2) vs. Krzysztof Wlodarczyk (No. 8), cruiserweights (for Gassiev's IBF title), World Boxing Super Series, Newark, New Jersey (Audience Network).
OCTOBER 21 – Zhanat Zhakiyanov (No. 3) vs. Ryan Burnett (No. 6), bantamweights (for Burnett's IBF and Zhakiyanov's WBA titles), Belfast, Northern Ireland (Sky, HBO delayed). Also, Paul Hyland Jr. vs. Stephen Ormond, lightweights.
OCTOBER 21 – Cecilia Braekhus vs. Mikaela Lauren, welterweights (for Braekhus' IBF, WBA, WBC and WBO titles), Stokke, Norway.
OCTOBER 22 – Hassan N'Dam (No. 7) vs. Ryota Murata (No. 8), middleweights, Tokyo. Also, Daigo Higa vs. Tomas Masson, flyweights (for Higa's WBC title); Ken Shiro (No. 6) vs. Pedro Guevara (No. 1), junior flyweights (for Shiro's WBC title).
OCTOBER 27 – Antonio Moran vs. Salvador Briseno, lightweights, Mexico City (Telemundo).
OCTOBER 27 – Juergen Braehmer vs. Rob Brant, super middleweights, World Boxing Super Series, Schwerin, Germany (Audience Network, delayed).

NOVEMBER

DEONTAY WILDER VS. BERMANE STIVERNE

Date: November 4
Location: Barclays Center, Brooklyn
Division: Heavyweights (for Wilder's WBC title)
RING Ratings: Wilder No. 2
TV: Showtime
Watchability rating (up to five stars): ★★
Also fighting: Shawn Porter vs. Adrian Granados, welterweights; Sergey Lipinets vs. Akihiro Kondo, junior welterweights (for vacant IBF title).
Significance: Wilder (38-0, 37 KOs) was supposed to face Luis Ortiz but the Cuban fell out after testing positive for a banned substance. That left the titleholder with a retread for his opponent, Stiverne, whom Wilder easily outpointed to win his belt in January 2015. Stiverne (25-2-1, 21 KOs) hasn't fought since he outpointed Derric Rossy in November 2015, meaning the Canadian will have been out of the ring for two years when he steps in to face arguably the biggest puncher in boxing. Wilder promised a knockout this time. That sounds about right.
Predictions: Rosenthal – Wilder KO 4; Fischer – Wilder TKO 10; Harty – Wilder KO 6; Coppinger – Wilder KO 8

NOVEMBER 2 – Jesus Soto Karass vs. Juan Carlos Abreu, welterweights, Tuscon, Arizona (ESPN2/EPSN Deportes).
NOVEMBER 3 – Sammy Valentin vs. Alejandro Barbosa, welterweights, Kissimmee, Florida (Telemundo).
NOVEMBER 4 – Dmitry Bivol (No. 7) vs. Trent Broadhurst, light heavyweights (for Bivol's WBA title) Monte Carlo (HBO). Also, Jamie McDonnell (No. 1) vs. Liborio Solis (No. 6), bantamweights; Scott Quigg (No. 9) vs. Oleg Yefimovich, featherweights.
NOVEMBER 10 – Luis Rosa vs. Yuandale Evans, featherweights, Cleveland (Showtime).
NOVEMBER 11 – Daniel Jacobs (No. 2) vs. Luis Arias, middleweights, Uniondale, N.Y. (HBO). Also, Jarrell Miller (No. 9) vs. Mariusz Wach, heavyweights.
NOVEMBER 11 – Jose Ramirez vs. Mike Reed, junior welterweights, Fresno, California (ESPN/ESPN Deportes). Also, Artur Beterbiev (No. 4) vs. Enrico Koelling, light heavyweights.
NOVEMBER 11 – Josh Taylor vs. Miguel Vasquez, welterweights, Edinburgh, Scotland.
NOVEMBER 11 – Liam Smith (No. 7) vs. Liam Williams, junior middleweights, Newcastle, England. Also, Thomas Patrick Ward vs. Sean Davis, junior featherweights.
NOVEMBER 16 – "Golden Boy Boxing on ESPN," San Juan, Puerto Rico (ESPN2/EPSN Deportes).
NOVEMBER 17 – Anthony Dirrell vs. Denis Douglin, super middleweights, Flint, Michigan (Fox Sports 1/Fox Deportes).
NOVEMBER 18 – Carl Frampton (No. 3) vs. Horacio Garcia, featherweights, Belfast, Northern Ireland (BT Sport). Also, Jerwin Ancajas (No. 6) vs. Jamie Conlan, junior bantamweights (for Ancajas' IBF title); Zolani Tete (No. 4) vs. Siboniso Gonya, bantamweights (for Tete's WBO title).
NOVEMBER 21 – Devon Alexander vs. Walter Castillo, welterweights, St. Petersburg, Florida (Fox Sports 1/Fox Deportes).
NOVEMBER 25 – Sergey Kovalev (No. 2) vs. Vyacheslav Shabranskyy, light heavyweights, New York (HBO).
NOVEMBER 25 – Donnie Nietes (No. 2) vs. Juan Carlos Reveco (No. 4), flyweights (for Nietes' IBF title), Philippines.
NOVEMBER 30 – "Golden Boy Boxing on ESPN," Oxon Hill, Maryland (ESPN2/EPSN Deportes).

DECEMBER

VASYL LOMACHENKO VS. GUILLERMO RIGONDEAUX

Date: December 9
Location: New York
Division: Junior lightweights (for Lomachenko's WBO title)
RING Ratings: Lomachenko No. 1, No. 3 P4P; Rigondeaux No. 1 junior featherweight, No. 4 P4P
TV: ESPN/ESPN Deportes
Watchability rating (up to five stars): ★★★
Also fighting: Christopher Diaz vs. Casey Ramos, junior lightweights.
Significance: Lomachenko (9-1, 7 KOs) has dazzled the boxing world in his short pro career but this matchup of two-time Olympic gold medalists could be tricky for him. Rigondeaux (17-0, 11 KOs) has the skills to confound anyone, including Lomachenko. And the Cuban will be motivated because he has waited for this type of opportunity his entire career. Rigondeaux is 36 and moving up two divisions to face Lomachenko, though. That could be too much to overcome.
Predictions: Rosenthal – Lomachenko UD; Fischer – Lomachenko TKO 9; Harty – Lomachenko UD; Coppinger – Rigondeaux SD

DECEMBER 2 – Miguel Cotto (No. 3) vs. Sadam Ali, junior middleweights (for Cotto's WBO title), New York (HBO).
DECEMBER 17 – Tony Bellew (No. 10) vs. David Haye, heavyweights, London.

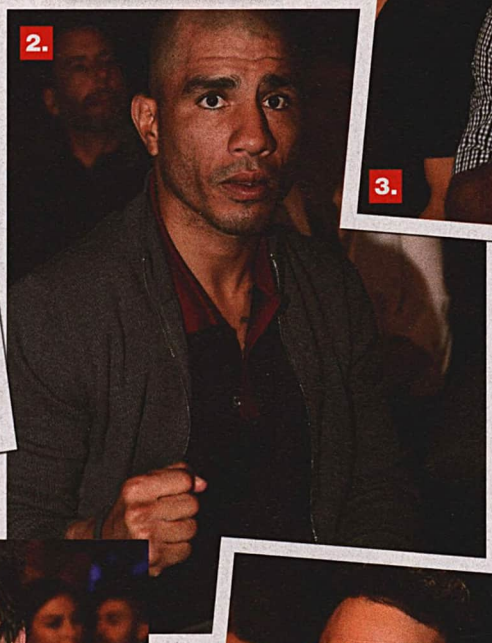
12-ROUND EDUCATION

James Toney (right) and Mike McCallum gave boxing purists and casual fight fans a treat with their hard-fought 12-round draw in December 1991, the first of their three bouts. Both middleweights were superbly skilled ring generals but also active, aggressive and more than willing to go toe-to-toe. McCallum, a hardnosed 35-year-old technician who was on a 10-bout win streak, put Toney to the test and the fearless 23-year-old counterpunching bad boy rose to the occasion. Toney, who earned THE RING's Fighter of the Year award in '91, later credited the McCallum fights for helping to transform him into a "thinking" fighter.

#ATTHEFIGHTS

By **Lamar Clark**

STYLES MAKE FIGHTS



Canelo-Golovkin brought out the stars. 1. comedian Tracy Morgan; 2. boxer Miguel Cotto; 3. former NBA star Charles Barkley; 4. actor Michael J. Fox (right); 5. hip-hop artist Chris Brown (left).

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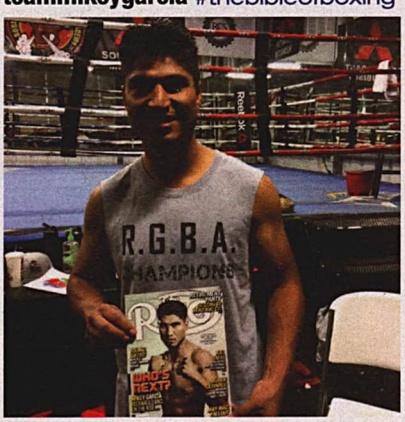

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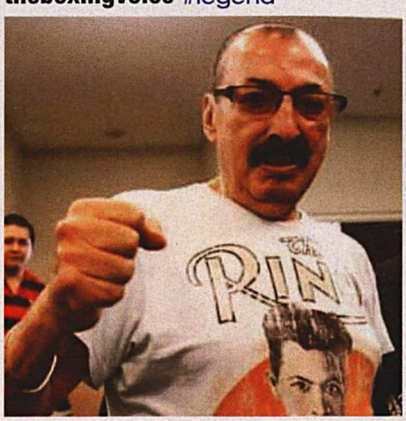

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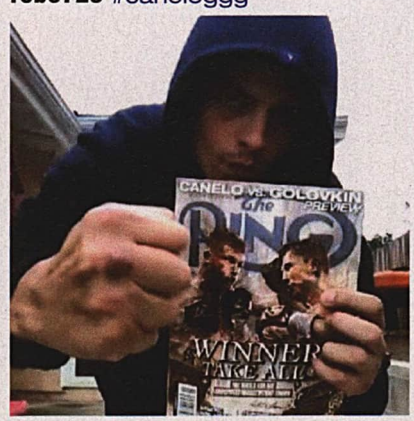

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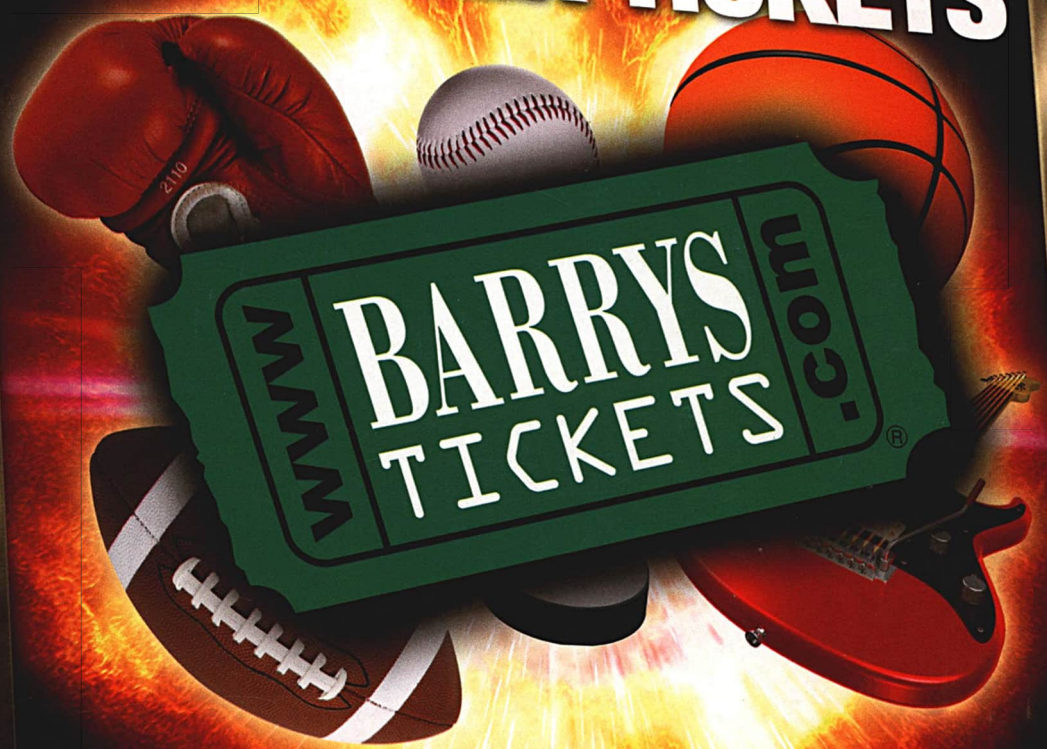

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